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BEYOND DISSOCIATION AND APPROPRIATION:
EVALUATING THE POLITICS OF U.S. PSYCHOLOGY VIA HERMENEUTIC
INTERPRETATION OF CULTURALLY EMBEDDED PRESENTATIONS OF YOGA

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Antioch University Seattle
Seattle, WA

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the Degree
Doctor of Psychology

By

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June 2019

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EVALUATING THE POLITICS OF U.S. PSYCHOLOGY VIA HERMENEUTIC
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This dissertation, by Genelle Benker, has been approved by the Committee Members signed below who recommend that it be accepted by the faculty of the Antioch University Seattle at Seattle, WA in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

**BEYOND DISSOCIATION AND APPROPRIATION:
EVALUATING THE POLITICS OF U.S. PSYCHOLOGY VIA HERMENEUTIC
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Genelle Benker

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Seattle, WA

Psychology in the United States (U.S.) is partially constituted by a cultural history of intellectual imperialism that undermines its altruistic intent and prevents disciplinary reflexivity. The scholarship and clinical application of Yoga exemplifies the way U.S. psychology continues to give lived authority to imperialism as part of the neoliberal agenda. Through a hermeneutic literature analysis of two source Yogic texts and peer-reviewed articles that exemplify the dominant discourse on Yoga in U.S. psychology, this dissertation identified themes that describe culturally embedded presentations of Yoga and their sociopolitical implications. Through interpretation, Yoga was conceptualized as: (a) a 5,000 year-old tradition that prescribes a life path to achieving one's full potential and includes (but is not limited to) an expression of psychology unique to Yoga that encompasses a complex moral framework, theory of mind, conceptualization of suffering and illness, and rich collection of healing technologies; (b) a phenomenological state of being, or unwavering realization of the self as undifferentiated unified consciousness; and (c) an artifact of U.S. psychology that enacts dissociated, unformulated, and unarticulated sociopolitical arrangements and events. Themes were presented as dialogue, allowing Yogic theory, philosophy, psychology, and morality to call into question facets of U.S. psychology as they relate to the human condition, psyche, mental illness, and healing

technologies. Within the scope of the dissertation, there were four articulated pathways for Yoga to influence U.S. psychology without reverting back to the unconscious inclination to dissociate or appropriate: (a) participate in the tradition of Yoga rather than trying to possess it; (b) acknowledge what the moral framework of Yoga highlights about the complicity of U.S. psychology in the neoliberal agenda; (c) discontinue practices that normalize and sustain intellectual imperialism; and (d) commit to disciplinary refinement and integrity. Also addressed were the limitations of this project and fruitful avenues of further inquiry, including possible steps towards disciplinary refinement and integrity. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA, <http://aura.antioch.edu/> and Ohio Link ETD Center, <https://etd.ohiolink.edu>.

Keywords: yoga, psychology, hermeneutics, and cultural appropriation

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During my graduate study, I became increasingly aware of prescribed attributes and characteristics of successful psychologists, such as productivity, self-sufficiency, and the ability to adapting to the constantly shifting terrain of institutions and social practices. I have learned to balance authenticity and impression management when confronted with hypocrisy and the tension between social justice theory and the pressure to conform to those in power. I am thankful to professors like Dr. Phil Cushman, who helped me see my experience as emblematic of larger cultural and historical trends. Learning to critically evaluate the moral and ontological assumptions of psychology has allowed me to situate the lived experiences of my patients and avoid the allure of overly simplistic diagnostic procedures and treatment approaches. I am forever in debt to those peers who shared my graduate experience and my professional stance: Adrian Garcia Psy.D., Cyn Clarfield Psy.D., Leslie LaFleur, Psy.D., Jennifer Sveund Psy.D., Amaris Espinosa Psy.D., Cailin Qualliotine Psy.D., and Maxim Livshetz, Psy.D.

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Orientation to the Dissertation

This dissertation represents an effort to unite a dialogue between two philosophic structures: the Yogic tradition and modern psychology within the United States. Yogic texts were used as primary sources within the present investigation, and as such, many Sanskrit terms appear throughout the document. In an effort to honor the Yogic tradition, promote awareness about the origin and development of Yoga, and to thoroughly equip the reader to engage with this dissertation, a glossary is provided for reference (see Appendix A). This glossary is comprised of the Sanskrit terms that appear within the document and their meanings relative to this course of study. It should be noted that these definitions were based on translations which may have inadvertently impacted their meaning. Every effort was made to preserve the integrity and authenticity of these terms in order to honor and accurately depict the Yogic tradition. In addition, Sanskrit terms were italicized for emphasis within the body of the document. At their first mention, a brief parenthetical explanation was provided. Subsequent mentions of Sanskrit words were not redefined, and as such, the reader is encouraged to refer to the glossary of terms.

Within the body of this work, in an effort to provide clarity for the hermeneutic inquiry and to increase readability, concepts were presented as themes and subthemes to facilitate structure for the discussion between source texts and exemplar articles. The entirety of the Yogic tradition cannot be adequately or accurately captured by artificially assigned themes and subthemes. It should be noted that these themes and concepts were the products of interpretation and were provided for the sake of clarity, rather than to further cull or appropriate facets of the Yogic tradition. For the sake of readability, themes and subthemes were organized by source text or exemplar article, and efforts were made to label these points of discussion clearly in order

to lead the reader through the texts in a narrative format. Themes and subthemes were often referential; the nature of the Yogic tradition is such that there is a rich and enmeshed philosophy and culture, making it difficult to separate these values into unique themes so there was a great deal of conceptual integration throughout the discussion of themes. As such, efforts were made to orient the reader via broad themes and subthemes throughout the discussion of each source text.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The tradition of U.S. psychology emerged late in the era of Enlightenment, an era marked by European imperialism. Cushman (1995) described that questions about human beings and human virtues in medieval Europe were considered the domain of religious leaders, who had authority over interpretations of the good. Cushman (1995) explained that when European religious-military-economic configurations of the Church and monarchy during the middle ages collapsed in the Renaissance era, philosophers began to supplant religious leaders as public intellectuals. The feudalistic marriage of church and state resulted in mounting fragmentation, violence, and corruption that culminated in a cultural preference for philosophy, over religion, called Renaissance Humanism. Cushman (1995) wrote, “The Renaissance emphasized an interest in human rather than divine truth...” (p. 365). He asserted that the secular celebration of the Renaissance era eventually resulted in the subordination of communal values to individualistic drives, feudalism displaced by capitalism, and the rise of empiricism and modern science during the period of Enlightenment.

Enlightenment era philosophers grappled with the heightened uncertainty and moral ambiguity that accompanied the intellectual freedom and expansive optimism of the Renaissance (Cushman, 1995). Introducing a multitude of individual perspectives unconstrained by shared religious or communal beliefs incited these philosophers to question the nature of truth, reality, morality, and the human psyche. The desire for absolute truth that characterized the era of Enlightenment united the threads of philosophical inquiry in a movement to create a universally applicable science of psychology. U.S. psychology can be understood as a modern-day expression of continued efforts to achieve this original aim.

Psychology in the U.S. is, itself, a cultural artifact; a moral vision of human beings that was birthed during this historical period of Enlightenment. Smith (1999) articulated how the idealism of Enlightenment, the belief in an ever-expanding empire, resulted in an insatiable, imperialistic drive to collect and catalogue the material, intellectual, and spiritual wealth of other cultures. Gadamer (1975) contended that this same era of Enlightenment gave rise to the presupposition that a meticulous application of scientific method would safeguard against all error. The authority given to method cannot be separated from the manner in which Europeans encountered other indigenous philosophies, materials, or knowledge and understood them in instrumental terms. The scientific method, and its rhetoric of objectivity, functioned as a mechanism of appropriation and the means to privilege a Western approach to knowing and learning. Smith (1999) wrote:

Enlightenment provided the spirit, the impetus, the confidence, and the political and economic structures that facilitated the search for new knowledges. The project of Enlightenment is often referred to as modernity, and it is that project which is claimed to have provided the stimulus for the industrial revolution, the philosophy of liberalism, the development of disciplines in the sciences, and the development of public education.
(p. 58)

Western academia developed in the context of intellectual imperialism and continues to rigidly adhere to the scientific method as the principle means of inquiry and interpretation. The research and scholarship of U.S. psychologists is embedded in this context where subjective, cultural, and historical understandings are often misunderstood as an obstacle to the perfection of reason as method (Gadamer, 1975). Obscured by disproportionate faith in method, the moral and ontological assumptions of the Enlightenment era have continued to operate, defining our

modes of interpretation and influencing the understandings they produce. Method as universal and unquestionable has become a prejudice that generates powerful rhetoric. In this way, method has had an inadvertent imperializing effect, where the following questions, per Said (1983), have become mute: Who inquires and who is the subject of inquiry within academic research? What cultural tradition informs what is deemed worthy of inquiry? What cultural tradition developed the method used to inquire? What cultural assumptions comprise the method selected? Who benefits from the results of the inquiry? By ignoring these questions, mainstream U.S. psychology is complicit in the politics of interpretation by adopting a stance of ideological superiority (Richardson, Fowers, & Guignon, 1999). By evading these questions, the scholarship and professional practice of U.S. psychologists unknowingly reproduce the intellectual imperialism present during the Enlightenment era and its instrumental approach to encountering the other.

Western psychologists unconsciously impose a culturally bound epistemology by presenting their ideology and modes of inquiry as ahistorical and objective. Scholars of U.S. psychology assign meaning to and culturally appropriate traditional wisdom from around the world. Using the scientific method, selected practices and principles are studied and their relative psychological import is measured and documented. The acquisition of cultural practices serves to reify the ontological assumptions of mainstream psychology, and does not result in disciplinary refinement or reflexivity. Western research methods are themselves almost never examined. By design, scientific methods of inquiry exclude cultural origin and context. In some cases, this context is predominantly seen as irrational, primitive, or religious, and thus other indigenous psychologies are rarely recognized as worthy of consideration (Christopher, Wendt, Marecek, & Goodman, 2014).

Mindfulness Based Psychology (MBP) is a quintessential example of the way cultural appropriation undermines the altruistic intent of U.S. psychology. An in-depth historical and cultural account of how Vipassana meditation was decontextualized from Buddhist psychology and utilized to develop MBP is beyond the scope of this work and has recently been addressed by a number of authors (Aronson, 2004; Bergkamp, 2007; Christopher, Oswal, & Deokar, 2013). What follows is a brief explanation of how a decontextualized cultural practice serves to reinforce the status quo and accompanying psychological ills of a given era when the practice is applied in another place and time or outside its context of origin.

Vipassana meditation is part of a rich tradition that can be understood as an indigenous, specifically Buddhist, psychology. Because scientific research methods are seen as objective and their corresponding results are seen as universal, Western academics are not in the habit of recognizing indigenous systems of psychology other than our own. Instead they tend to focus on evaluating the merit of practices, techniques, and concepts within the context of the U.S. While there is undeniable value in a careful evaluation of merit, such an evaluation is often guided by unrecognized cultural assumptions about what results in psychological health. The meaning, method, purpose, and benefit of Vipassana meditation is best understood within the context of Buddhist psychology. Unfortunately, to facilitate its evaluation using Western research methods, Vipassana was reduced to a basic method and studied with an eye toward its instrumental value. After the techniques that comprise Vipassana were found to have clinical benefit, their widespread use by Western psychologists ensued, under the umbrella of MBP. The popular application of these practices occurred without an evaluation of whether Buddhist psychology and U.S. psychology are philosophically compatible.

While accompanied by fragmented pieces of its cultural context, the original meaning, method, and purpose of Vipassana were not retained when applied in the context of U.S. psychology. Instead, the practices of MBP functioned as a tool for dissociation that supports the cognitive agenda in the context of neoliberalism. The cognitive agenda asserts that an individual's problems are not caused by their relationships or their status within their social political world, but by problematic thinking (Sampson, 1981). Mindfulness based psychology is used to reinforce this stance, as the root of suffering is explained as a mental distortion of our otherwise peaceful nature. Further, MBP teaches people to identify problematic thoughts, label them, dismiss them, and return to a relaxed state of mind. This may be one reason why the mindfulness movement has gained such traction in the West, as it provides temporary respite from the untenable felt experience of the modern world. Typically, MBP does not teach people to recognize their cognition, affect, and somatosensory experience as part of an interpretive system that provides them with vital information about themselves and the world they live in. It does not make room to evaluate what is observed, nor does it encourage us to intentionally respond to it. MBP primarily teaches people to tolerate and take responsibility for the physical, psychological, and moral pain and confusion that is caused by configurations of their sociopolitical world, which, in turn, can breed complacency. Conversely, Vipassana practiced within the context of Buddhist psychology teaches one to become fundamentally embodied, to witness physical, emotional and psychological experience without reacting impulsively. While the practices of Buddhist psychology, like MBP, may have the effect of creating some psychological distance from one's experience, making it more tolerable, the difference is that these practices are taught within a philosophical framework that changes their effect.

The philosophy of Buddhism views the individual self, the sense of identity, and personal preferences and aversions as barriers that comprise the root of suffering (Christopher et al., 2013). Buddhist philosophy claims that our primary misunderstanding is due to seeing the self as a self-contained individual, separate from all existence, denying interdependence. Buddhist philosophy promotes non-attachment and non-violence (Aronson, 2004). These principals stand in contrast to the hyper-individualistic and capitalistic culture observed in the West. The experience of interconnection and responsibility for the wellbeing of the other that Buddhist psychology imparts protects against the dissociative or numbing potential of this practice. Within its cultural context, Vipassana provides the foundation for embodied communal participation. This captures one unintended consequence of Vipassana being decontextualized from Buddhist psychology and introduced by American psychologists as MBP; it is an example of how appropriated cultural practices are misunderstood and, how their impact depends on the cultural context in which they are practiced.

More recently, American psychologists have started to dismantle the cultural tradition of Yoga, decontextualizing practices and concepts and dropping them into the Western toolbox. A number of Empirically Based Treatments (EBTs) are emerging where selected practices from the Yoga tradition are being combined with gold-standard manualized techniques such as Trauma Sensitive Yoga (TSY), Little Flower Yoga, Trauma Interventions using Mindfulness Based Extinction and Reconsolidation (TIMBER), Transformative Life Skills (TLS), and Integrative Restoration (iRest). This is, again, conducted under the umbrella of MBP without assessing the philosophical compatibility of each tradition. Yoga can be understood as inclusive of its own indigenous psychology, one older and, arguably, more established than Western psychology. By dissociating Yogic psychology and appropriating Yogic practices to bolster U.S. psychology, we

fail to see how our own tradition determines what we consider relevant for study, how we determine what is significant, and how we selectively appropriate those aspects of the other's traditions which support our own.

Understanding attained through appropriation protects U.S. psychologists from having to evaluate their moral commitments and ontological assumptions. When left unevaluated, the influence of our preconceptions shape how we understand the traditions of the other, and the practices we selectively appropriate from them. This suggests that decontextualized practices do not produce the same outcome when implemented in a foreign context, where techniques and their purpose are described using different cultural values. This cultural tendency is an expression of the way intellectual imperialism has been embodied and given lived authority by U.S. psychologists, which undermines the integrity of the discipline and halts the cultivation of disciplinary reflexivity.

Christopher et al. (2014) urged U.S. psychologists to recognize the tradition of Western psychology as indigenous, to seriously consider other psychological traditions by allowing them to call into question the moral and ontological assumptions of U.S. psychology, and use hermeneutic concepts as a compass to navigate international research and practice. The present dissertation acts as a response to this call. The practice of Gadamerian dialogue and interpretation are applied to answer the following question: Is it possible for U.S. psychologists to seriously consider Yoga as a whole, rather than to selectively appropriate facets of the tradition we find desirable while dissociating their context? The structure of this inquiry was designed with this aim in mind, starting with the hermeneutic literature analysis of two source Yogic texts. Immersion in source Yogic literature allows for the identification of themes that illuminate a more complete picture of the tradition as a whole. This is followed by the analysis

of ten articles that serve as exemplars for the dominant discourse on Yoga in U.S. psychology. Immersion in the exemplars supports the articulation of themes concerning how Yoga is understood and applied in U.S. psychology and the associated suggestions about the cultural and historical context from which they emerged. These thematic findings are put into conversation in an attempt to facilitate a genuine encounter between Yoga and U.S. psychology. The intent of this thematic dialogue is to allow Yogic theory, philosophy, psychology, and morality to call into question facets of U.S. psychology as they relate to the human condition, psyche, mental illness, and healing technologies, and to articulate avenues for allowing Yoga to influence U.S. psychology without reverting back to the unconscious inclination to dissociate or appropriate.

CHAPTER II: BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Context

The tradition of Yoga is comprised of many branches and schools that arose in different parts of Asia and share a common phenomenological or experiential aim (Feuerstein, 2013). While the phenomenon of Yoga is described as a universal experience, each lineage of the tradition diverged in response to an array of factors that altered the way Yoga was understood and practiced across time and place. Some of these factors include re-interpretations of ancient text, emphasis on specific tenants within Yoga's moral framework, re-definition of terms, varied recommendations for the ideal sequence and application of practice, and insights gained through practice that resulted in the introduction of new literature or teachings.

A nuanced history of a 5,000-year-old, multifaceted tradition is beyond the scope of this project. Instead I will introduce seminal texts and literature, identify relevant authors and historical figures, briefly discuss a few general trends in the evolving philosophy and practice of Yoga, and note historical events that may have influenced the trajectory of Yoga's application. This is a two-part history; part one outlines how Yoga was understood and practiced within India from 4000 BCE forward, and part two highlights Yoga's introduction into U.S. culture, its spread and popularization, its adoption by the field of psychology, as well as a discussion of how Yoga may have been transfigured by the zeitgeist of U.S. culture during the eras since its introduction. This history provides a basic framework for the textual analysis with the goal of situating the temporal and cultural backdrop in order to make sense of previous and new interpretations of Yoga.

Brief History Part One: Yoga in India from Antiquity Forward

The complex organic development of the Yogic tradition makes a succinct and

chronological presentation difficult. Rather, a linear organization is presented comprised of three primary subsections: texts, authors and teachers, and historical figures and events. Within this format, information is presented chronologically in each subsection.

The phenomenon of Yoga. Feuerstein (2013) pointed to a phenomenon that ties the branches and schools of Yoga together: the experience of a sustained conscious state where our finite sense of self, known as bodymind, ego, or atman becomes one with an all-pervasive sense of self known as unified consciousness, undifferentiated awareness, or parama-atman. The word Yoga itself is derived from the Sanskrit root yuj, (pronounced yug; Zambito, 1992). The experience of unified consciousness (atman with parama-atman) captured by the term Yoga is described as samadhi, which means unwavering contentment, peace, and bliss. The abundant literature, two paths, four schools, and numerous lineages within the tradition all describe and prescribe routes to realizing Yoga as a phenomenon or psychological state.

Pre-Classical Yoga. The Pre-Classical period, as defined by Feuerstein (2013) describes the origins of Yoga. It is impossible to trace when the phenomenon was first experienced, but this period marked its first documentation, initial description, the philosophy and mythology it was embedded in, and the tradition that began to form around it.

Texts. The origin of Yoga is attributed to the Indus-Saraswati civilization in India over 5,000 years ago (Frawley, 1990). Similar to Greek mythology, ancient Indian scripture took the form of storytelling that predominantly described the qualities and pastimes of numerous deities using hymns, verses, aphorisms, and epic narratives. In these tales, deities cohabitated with mortals, both modeling moral ideals and intervening during significant historical events. Deities communicated ideal human traits and philosophical tenants guiding ethical behavior, and provided insight into the mystery and paradox of human experience. In addition, ancient Yogic

literature blends mythology with historical events, and presents spiritual and philosophical concepts such as reincarnation as having authority.

The first written mention of Yoga was in the Rigveda, a collection of Sanskrit hymns and verses. The Rigveda is the oldest of four canonical Hindu texts referred to as The Vedas (Frawley, 1990). The original description of Yoga in The Vedas was woven into a complex mythology and moral framework referred to as Vedanta. The Rigveda (dated 4000 to 2000 BCE) is one of the oldest texts in any Indo-European language, and the oldest religious text in continued use (Witzel, 2003). While unclear, anthropologists estimate the remaining three Vedas (Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Arthaveda) were written sometime prior to 1500 BCE (Bhattacharya, 2006).

The Mahabharata (1400 BCE) is another epic narrative about the Kurukshetra war between the Kaurava and Pandava provinces of Ancient India. It contains a philosophical discussion of the *puruṣārthas* or the four goals of life. These goals are: (a) *Dharma*, calling, duty, or righteous purpose guided by morality; (b) *Artha*, acquisition and prosperity guided by ethics; (c) *Kaama*, desire, pleasure, and love guided by psychology; and (d) *Moksa*, spiritual liberation from the bondage of ego and suffering (Flood, 2005). The Mahabharata describes competing drives and values guiding moral action in ways similar to the Bible or the Qur'an (Johnson, 1998). The Bhagavad Gita is probably the most well-known chapter of the Mahabharata. It presents a synthesis of *dharma*, *bhakti* (devotion), and *moksa*, and the paradox humans encounter as they attempt to embody these virtues.

Yoga was refined through The Upanishads, where more specific instruction was provided for how to enact its practices, principles, and philosophy. The earliest Upanishads are dated sometime between 800 and 400 BCE (Feuerstein, 2013). The Upanishads contain over 200

scriptures and have gone through multiple translations and interpretations. They are credited with an in-depth explanation of the four schools of Yoga; *Jnana* (inquiry), *Raja* (royal path of physical and mental self-control), *Karma* (selfless service), and *Bhakti* (Witzel, 2003).

The Ramayana (500 to 100 BCE) was another epic in world literature and was largely influential with regard to the socio-cultural impact of Yogic values and principles (Feuerstein, 2013).

Specifically, it depicted the duties of relationship, and communicated the ideal traits of a father, servant, brother, wife, and king (Witzel, 2003). The characters who modeled these archetypal roles are Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Bharata, Hanuman, and Ravana. These gods and demi-gods were broadly influential, and constitute a bridge in Yogic literature between India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Lal, 2008).

Authors. The authors of these ancient scriptures are shrouded in obscurity, often described as having been born enlightened (fully conscious or spiritually awake) or presented as incarnations of different deities. For example, The Vedas are credited to a number of anonymous *rishis* (mystics, sages, or seers), who wrote the hymns and verses during ecstatic states that resulted from long periods of meditation (Feuerstein, 2013). *Vyasa*, literally translated as “the compiler” is a vague figure credited with arranging The Vedas into four major categories; the *Samhitas* (mantras and benedictions), the *Aranyakas* (text on rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices, and symbolic-sacrifices), the *Brahmanas* (commentaries on rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices), and The *Upanishads* (texts discussing meditation, philosophy, and spiritual knowledge; Lal, 2008). Little is known about *Vyasa*, who is sometimes referred to as both an incarnation of Vishnu (god of preservation) and immortal (Strauss, 2002). *Vyasa* is considered both the author of the Mahabharata and a character in its plot (Flood, 2005). Other sources indicate that *Vyasa* was a term given to various individuals charged with compiling scripture in India, and that 28

Vyasa have existed over the course of history (Strauss, 2002).

Historical Figures. Mahavira was a teacher who profoundly influenced the development of Pre-Classical Yogic philosophy. Born into royalty in 599 BCE, Mahavira left home at age 30 in pursuit of spiritual awakening (Singh, 2016). He abandoned worldly things, including his clothes, and became a monk for the next twelve-and-a-half years, practicing intense meditation and severe penance, which reportedly resulted in his omniscience (Feuerstein, 2013). As a result, Mahavira travelled throughout India and founded *Jainism*, a spiritual tradition that focused on individual liberation. He taught that the observance of the vows *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (chastity), and *aparigraha* (non-attachment, or abstaining from greed) are necessary to elevate one's quality of life. Later, these vows became known as *yama* (restrictions), or the first of the eight limbs of Yoga, a system of organization that conveys the core philosophy and pedagogy of Yoga, developed during the Classical period. Mahavira is believed to have attained *moksa* (emancipation, liberation, or salvation) at the age of 72 (Singh, 2016).

Classical Yoga. The understanding and practice of Yoga within the Classical period began to vary as the tradition branched in multiple directions. The powerful influence of the Yoga Sûtras of Patanjali is a significant example of this, given that this was the first text to present the principles of Yoga in a systematic and methodical manner. This is a notable variation from the poetic, subjective, and experiential descriptions in the epic narratives of the previous era, and may have paved the way for a manualized approach to teaching. Furthermore, texts emerged during the Classical period that place philosophical and theoretical emphasis on Yogic principles in ways that diverged from orthodox Vedic understanding. The Siva Sûtras and Spanda Sûtras were an expression of a new lineage of Tantric Yoga that no longer viewed the

bodymind as an obstacle to liberation. In addition, a plethora of literature on Bhakti Yoga produced during this period presented devotional love and ecstatic worship as a legitimate path to enlightenment. The mystical and embodied presentation of Yoga within the Bhakti and Tantric lineages stood in stark contrast conflicts against the earlier asceticism of Vedic Yoga.

Texts. The Classical period of Yoga is characterized by Patanjali's Yoga Sûtras. This first systematic presentation of Yoga, composed around 200 CE, outlined the philosophy underlying the Raja Yoga school of Yoga (Zambito, 1992). Patanjali organized the practice of Yoga into an eight-limbed path and outlined the experiential stages of *samadhi* or enlightenment.

The Chakra Samhita (800 CE), and the Susruta Samhita, are the two foundational Hindu texts that outlined the principles of Ayurveda, the system of medicine indigenous to India (Feuerstein, 2013). Ayurveda is steeped in Yogic theory on the nature of the human body, what constitutes evidence of health and wellbeing, and the etiology of disease as imbalance (Frawley, 1999). Beyond a shared philosophical foundation, Ayurveda frequently prescribes Yogic practices in order to restore balance and health. The Charaka Samhita stresses the importance of diet, hygiene, preventative medicine, education, and the teamwork between physician and patient necessary for recovery and health (Svoboda, 1992).

The Siva Sûtras and Spanda Sûtras (825 CE) are collections of aphorisms that comprise the Tantric tradition of spiritual mysticism known as *Kashmir Shaivism* (Feuerstein, 2013). These aphorisms discuss the Yoga of vibration or divine pulsation as the felt union of spirit and matter. There are various myths about their authorship, pointing to the belief that the sûtras are the result of divine revelation and are not considered the product of human intellect (Singh, 1992).

The Bhagavata Purana (900 to 1000 CE), one of 18 histories within the Hindu tradition

(Goodall, 1996), promoted the *Bhakti* school of Yoga. The text describes the life of Krishna, who is considered an incarnation of the deity Vishnu (Singh, 2016). Aside from integrating themes from Adi Shankara's philosophy of *Advaita* (see historical figures of classical Yoga), it discussed a wide range of topics including cosmology, genealogy, geography, mythology, legend, music, dance, and culture (Flood, 2005). It is a revered text in *Vaishnavism*, which presented a form of religion that competes with the asceticism of Vedanta, wherein *bhakti* (devotion to your beloved deity via practices that result in mental absorption) ultimately leads to self-knowledge, liberation, and bliss (Singh, 2016).

The Yoga Vasistha is a six-volume text, structured as a discourse between sage Vasistha and prince Rama. The first book presents Rama's frustration with the nature of life, human suffering, and disdain for the world. The second describes the desire for liberation and the nature of those who seek such liberation, through the character of Rama. The third and fourth books emphasize free will by asserting that liberation comes through a spiritual life that requires self-effort and presenting theories of existence embedded in stories. The fifth book discusses the power of meditation to liberating the individual, while the sixth book describes the state of an enlightened and blissful Rama (Flood, 2005). The teachings of the Yoga Vasistha are structured as stories and fables associated with *drsti-srsti* sub-school of *Advaita* which holds that all material existence is an illusion of the mind (*maya*). The text is notable for explaining the concept of non-duality and how Yoga can be understood through this lens (Flood, 2005).

The Nalavira Divya Prabandham, the Yogarahasya, and the Nyayatattva were also written during the Classical period. Together, these texts are considered preceptors to the *Vaisnava* tradition. *Vaishnavism* can be thought of as a denomination within Hinduism that worships deity Vishnu, falls under the umbrella of *Bhakti* Yoga, the school that puts emphasis on

devotional love as the most direct route to liberation from suffering (Desikachar, 1995).

Authors. While the authors of some texts during this era remain anonymous, specific traceable authors emerged during the Classical period which suggest the beginning of a trend where the importance of teachers and spiritual leaders was emphasized. For example, Patanjali, author of the Yoga Sûtras, is often referred to as the “father of Yoga,” as his work continues to influence of most modern styles of Yoga today (Feuerstein, 2013).

Vasugupta, who wrote the Siva Sûtras and Spanda Sûtras, was a sage who continued the practice of crediting the inspiration for writing to a divine or beyond human source. One myth is that he received the aphorisms in a dream visitation of a Siddha, a semi-divine being. Another is that the deity *Shiva* instructed him to go to a certain rock on which he would find the teachings inscribed. This rock, called Shankaropala continues to be visited by devotees today (Singh, 1992).

The Yoga Vasistha was produced during this period, and while there is no certainty around its authorship, it is attributed to Valkimi, who is also credited with writing the Ramayana (Witzel, 2003). The text is named after sage Vasistha who is mentioned and revered in the seventh book of the Rigveda by Adi Shankara (Witzel, 2003).

Nathamuni, a theologian who lived around 900 BCE, was known for having collected and compiled the Nalavira Divya Prabandham which is the first of the Sri Vaishnava *acharyas* (texts; Singh, 2016). Nathamuni is also the author of *Yogarahasya* and *Nyāyatattva* (Desikachar, 2003). Together, these texts are considered the preceptors to the tradition of *Vaisnava*.

Historical Figures. Adi Shankaracharya (788 to 820 CE) was a *guru* (spiritual teacher or leader) who is commonly thought to be the father of *Advaita Vedanta* (a school of Hindu philosophy and religious practice; Feuerstein, 2013). *Advaita Vedanta* literally translates as “not

two” and incorporates concepts of non-duality derived from Yogic philosophy (Singh, 1992). Adi Shankaracharya established four major *mathas* (spiritual organizations/centers) in the four corners of the peninsula — north (Jyothirmath), south (Sringeri), east (Puri), and west (Shāradā) — to propagate the philosophy of *Advaita Vedanta* and promulgate the concept of *sanatana dharma* (righteousness) as an ideal life path (Flood, 2005). Each of his primary four disciples took charges of a *math*, establishing a strong *guru-sishya parampara* (lineage passed down from teachers to students). This became an influential hierarchical model of teaching Yoga that continues today (Flood, 2005).

Post-Classical Yoga. Post-Classical Yoga was a period thought to occur a few centuries after Patanjali (Feuerstein, 2013). During this era, advanced practitioners created a system of practices designed to rejuvenate the body and prolong life. The Vedic concept that views the body as an illusion, as a trap that ensnared the soul in worldly desire and needed to be transcended, fell under question. Simultaneously, a new understanding of the body emerged, as both the manifestation of pure consciousness and the means to achieve enlightenment. This philosophical break with Vedic Yoga and emphasis on the new lineage of Tantric Yoga initiated an exploration of physical-spiritual connections and body centered practices. This perspective and application of Yoga became known as Hatha Yoga, the lineage of Yoga that was later promoted worldwide during the modern era (Frawley, 1990).

Texts. Around the year 1050 CE, some of the seminal Tantric texts, including the Kaulajnananirnaya, the Matsyendrasamhita, and Akula-ViraTantra were composed (Bhattacharya, 2006). These texts are associated with *Kaula Shaivism*, a Tantric branch of Hinduism (Feuerstein, 2013).

The Yoga Upanishads, such as the Yogatattva Upanishad, were drawn out of the

Arthaveda and expounded upon around the year 1050 CE (Feuerstein, 2013). This did not include the Bindu Upanishad, which may have been selectively interpreted as early as 900 CE. The Yoga Upanishads include a discussion of four styles of yogic practice: *Mantra*, *Laya*, *Hatha*, and *Raja* and elaborate on the meaning of the *atman* (Flood, 2005). The Yogatattva Upanishad established that *jnana* (knowledge) without Yoga cannot secure *moksa* (emancipation, liberation, or salvation) and the reverse, liberation cannot occur without knowledge.

The Hatha Yoga Pradipika, a classic manual on the practices of Hatha Yoga and their benefits, was written around the start of the 14th century (Feuerstein, 2013). It is the oldest of the three seminal texts on Hatha Yoga, the other two being the Gheranda Samhita (early 17th century) and the Shiva Samhita (1750; Muktibodananda, 1993).

Around the middle of the 15th century, a branch of Tantra focused on the worship of *Devi* (divine feminine), became more recognized with the composition of the Yogini-Tantra (Feuerstein, 2013). This text called for the renunciation of binding and mainstream moral codes; suspending prohibitions concerning marriage between members of different castes, allowed for women to more freely participate in spiritual practice, and advocated for the deconstruction of arranged marriages (Feuerstein, 2013).

Authors and teachers. Kaulajnananirnaya, the Matsyendrasamhita and Akula-Vira Tantra, were composed by Matsyendranatha, a saint and *yogi* considered the founder of Hatha Yoga and the Tantric lineage of teachers and practitioners associated with *Kaula Shaivism* (Feuerstein, 2013). Matsyendranath's work brought about social and religious awakening by combining revered tenants from Buddhism and Hinduism in his teaching (Singh, 2016). He is revered as one of the 84 *mahasiddhas* (great sages) and considered the *guru* of Gorakshanath, the influential founder of the Nath Hindu monastic movement in India (Singh, 2016). Swami

Svatmarama (disciple of Goraknath), compiled the verses of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika.

The mystic, poet, and saint Kabir (1440 to 1518) contributed to the devotional trend within Hinduism, and his verses are often found in Sikh scripture (Singh, 2016). Born into a Muslim family, he converted to Bhakti Yoga due to his encounters with an influential teacher and spiritual leader, Ramananda (Singh, 2016). Tulsi Das is another poet-saint (1532 to 1623) known for his composition of the Hindi Ramayana. His translation of the Ramayana made the philosophy embedded in this ancient epic poem widely accessible (Feuerstein, 2013).

Historical events. In the 16th century the British and Dutch established trading companies in India and 1760 marked the beginning of the *British Raj* or colonization of India (Feuerstein, 2013). Outside of Alexander the Great's brief invasion and occupation of Northern India (326 to 321 BCE), this denotes the longest period of colonization by a Western country, as India did not regain political independence until 1947 (Feuerstein, 2013). While a nuanced interpretation of the influence colonization on Yoga within India is beyond the scope of this work, the increasing emphasis on Yoga as a manualized practice for the health, the privileged position given to *gurus*, and the shift away from mysticism and asceticism that occurred during this period does mirror Western ideologies of instrumentalism and individualism.

Modern Yoga. The Modern era is distinguished by a shift in focus from teachings to teachers, where spiritual leaders proliferated and influenced both communal life and politics. While many, if not all, of these teachers published re-interpretations of ancient scripture, the events of their lives, and their spiritual and material accomplishments were used to justify the power and privilege awarded to them. The tendency to elevate the individual is pronounced, and spiritual teachers and leaders more frequently traveled at home and abroad, disseminating the teachings of Yoga and attracting followers.

Teachers and spiritual leaders. Rammohun Roy (1772 to 1833) founded the *Brahma Samaj*, an influential socio-religious reform movement (Feuerstein, 2013). Influential in the fields of politics, public administration, and education, as well as religion, he is known for his efforts to abolish the practice of *sati*, where widows were expected to sacrifice themselves atop their husband's funeral pyres. Notable was his protest of the East India Company's decision to support vernacular education and his insistence that English become the dominant language in India. Rammohun was also responsible for introducing the word Hinduism into the English language in 1816 (Frawley, 1990).

Ramakrishna (1836 to 1886) was an Indian mystic and *yogi* reportedly given to *Bhavas* (spiritual moods or ecstatic states) from a young age (Singh, 2016). He was devoted to the goddess Kali and was influenced by several religious traditions including *Tantra*, *Vaishnava Bhakti*, and *Advaita Vedanta* (Singh, 2016). Admiration by Bengali elites resulted in the formation of the Ramakrishna Mission, led by his chief disciple Swami Vivekananda (1863 to 1902) a key figure in the dissemination of Hinduism and Yoga in Europe and the United States (Weitzel, 2003).

Sri Yukteswar Giri (1855-1936) was the monastic name of Priya Nath Karar, a *Kriya Yogi* (practitioner of Tantric Yoga), a *Jyotisha* (Vedic astrologer/astronomer), a scholar of the Bhagavad Gita and the Bible, and an educator (Feuerstein, 2013). He is well known as the teacher of Paramahansa Yogananda, who was a key figure in the dissemination of Yoga worldwide.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861 to 1941) was a poet, academic, and mystic from Bengal (Feuerstein, 2013). Not only responsible for having translated and interpreted some of Kabir's early work, he reshaped Bengali literature, music, and art by making it more accessible to the

modern reader, listener, and viewer (Feuerstein, 2013). Author of *Gitanjali*, he became the first non-European poet and lyricist to win the Nobel Prize in literature in 1913 (Johnson, 1998).

Mahatma Gandhi (1869 to 1948) is a religious and political leader who played an instrumental role in India attaining political independence from Britain. He taught, spoke, practiced, and lived in accordance with Yogic principals in ways that were largely influential both in India and abroad. His work promoting the virtue of *ahimsa* as both a tactic of political resistance and a moral framework for day to day living continues to be a source of inspiration internationally (Feuerstein, 2013).

Sri Aurobindo (1872 to 1950), founded Integral Yoga and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry (Feuerstein, 2013). He was an Indian nationalist, philosopher, yogi, *guru*, and poet. He joined the movement for independence from British rule, becoming one of its influential leaders before leaving to practice spiritual reform. Aurobindo is known for his vision of human progress as it relates to spiritual evolution (Strauss, 2002). His prolific literary works include extensive translations of early Yogic philosophy and poetry, providing rich interpretations in commentaries on The Vedas, Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1943 and for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950.

Ramana Maharshi (1879 to 1950) is one of modern India's most renowned sages (Feuerstein, 2013). He had a near death experience at the age of 16, during which he reportedly became aware of a "current" or "force" which he recognized as the true "self" (Feuerstein, 2013). After this experience, he left home, renounced the pursuit of wealth and family life, and informally became a *sannyasin* (monk). He attracted many followers who regarded him as an *avatar* (one who is born awakened) and sought his *darshan* (blessing received by seeing or being seen by the divine). In later years, an ashram grew up around him, where visitors received

upadesa (spiritual instruction) by sitting in his company and raising concerns and questions (Singh, 2016). While Ramana Maharshi gave his approval to a variety of paths and practices, he specifically recommended *jnana* as the principal means by which to remove ignorance, and *bhakti* to transcend the preferences and aversions of the limited ego (Singh, 2016). Since the 1930s, his teachings have been popularized in the west, resulting in his worldwide recognition as an enlightened being.

Swami Saraswati Sivananda (1887 to 1963) was a Hindu spiritual teacher and proponent of Yoga and Vedanta (Feuerstein, 2013). He initially studied medicine and served as a physician for several years before taking up monasticism. Sivananda founded the Divine Life Society in 1936, the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy in 1948, and authored over 200 books, many of which expound upon Yogic philosophy and practice. He established the Sivananda Ashram, where Sivananda Yoga is propagated by his disciple Vishnudevananda. Sivananda Yoga has now spread to many parts of the world (Muktibodhananda, 1993).

Tirumalai Krishnamacharya, (1888 to 1989) was a *guru*, ayurvedic healer, and scholar who is widely regarded as one of the most influential Yoga teachers of the 20th century (Desikachar, 1995). He held degrees in all six Vedic *Darsanas* (philosophies), and, while under the patronage of the King of Mysore, traveled around India giving lectures and demonstrations to promote Yoga. These included demonstrating spiritual feats such as stopping his heartbeat (Singh, 2016). He is widely considered as the architect of *vinyāsa* as formal practice aligning the flow of movement with breath (Desikachar, 1995). Some of Krishnamacharya's students include many of Yoga's most renowned teachers, including B. K. S. Iyengar, T. K. V. Desikachar, Indra Devi, and Pattabhi Jois. While he is revered globally as a yogi, in India, Krishnamacharya is known primarily as a healer who used Yoga and Ayurveda to restore health and well-being

(Frawley, 1999). He authored four books on Yoga as well as several essays and poetic compositions.

Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 to 1952), a *yogi* and *guru*, is widely known internationally for his work in India and abroad (Feuerstein, 2013). He introduced millions of Westerners to the teachings of meditation and Kriya Yoga. In 1920, he founded the Self-Realization Fellowship in order to disseminate his teachings on India's ancient practices and philosophy of Yoga, introducing the practice of meditation worldwide (Feuerstein, 2013).

Sri Anandamayi Ma (1896 to 1982) was a *guru* who influenced evolution of Yoga as the first female to be regarded as a self-realized master (Feuerstein, 2013). Sivananda Saraswati described her as "the most perfect flower the Indian soil has produced" (Lipski, 1993). She is well known for her demonstrations of precognition, faith healing, and miracles such as the manifestation of food (Lipski, 1993).

Nisargadatta Maharaj (1897 to 1981), born Maruti Shivrampant Kambli, was an Indian *guru* of nondualism and belonged to a Tantric lineage of teachers. The publication in 1973 of an English translation of the talks he gave in Marathi, brought him worldwide recognition and followers, especially from North America and Europe (Feuerstein, 2013).

Starting in the mid-20th century, teaching Yoga began to focus heavily on the universal benefit of postures, breathing practices, and meditation. Sri K. Pattabhi Jois (1915 to 2009) was an Indian Yoga teacher who developed a popular *vināsa* style of Yoga known as Ashtanga Yoga. In 1948, Jois established the Ashtanga Yoga Research Institute in Mysore India where students were accepted from around the globe to study and practice Ashtanga Yoga (Feuerstein, 2013).

B. K. S. Iyengar (1918 to 2014) founded of the style of Yoga known as Iyengar Yoga and

is considered one of the foremost Yoga teachers in the world (Singleton, 2014). The author of many books on Yoga practice and philosophy, his work made the philosophy and application of Yoga internationally accessible (Singleton, 2014). The Indian government has bestowed many awards upon him, and Time magazine named him one of the 100 most influential people in the world (Singleton, 2014).

Mata Amritanandamayi (born 1953), is a spiritual leader and *guru*, often referred to as simply as *amma* (mother) by her followers. Unlike many contemporary teachers, she continues to expound primarily on the philosophy of Yoga particularly within the *Bhakti* and *Karma* schools of thought (Amsden, 2012). She is called the hugging saint in the West because of her unorthodox practice of embracing individuals as a form of *darshan*. In her 30 years of traveling and teaching, she has embraced more than 33 million people throughout the world (Amsden, 2012). She has received a number of honors and awards including the Hindu Faith Award by the Parliament of World Religions in 1993, and The Gandhi-King Award for Non-Violence by the United Nations in Geneva in 2002. She has also been featured in Watkins' list of the top 100 most spiritually influential living people in the world, and The Huffington Post chose her as one of the 50 most powerful women religious leaders in 2014 (Blumberg, 2014).

Brief History Part Two: Dissemination and Practice of Yoga in the United States

Since its arrival in the United States, Yoga has been transfigured from a tradition to a technique. While the moral, philosophical, and theoretical precepts of Yoga were the first elements of the tradition introduced in the U.S., these facets gained traction primarily within fringe or countercultural circles. Only when reduced to a series of decontextualized techniques did the value and benefit of Yoga emerge in dominant cultural discourse. In the second part of this brief history I introduce texts, historical figures, and discuss trends in the dissemination and

practice of Yoga within the context of U.S. culture.

Texts. The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875. It was a non-sectarian entity responsible for the translation of a number of source Yogic texts into English. The translation of these texts made the moral, theoretical, and philosophical framework of Yoga accessible to readers in the United States for the first time (Feuerstein, 2013). The Theosophical Society was interested in studying the tenants of Eastern religions and later adopted the following guiding principles for the Society's agenda; (a) recognition of a universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color; (b) significance given to the study of comparative religion, philosophy, and science; and, (c) the investigation of unexplained laws of nature and the power latent in religion (Kirby, 1885).

After Jung gave a seminar in 1932 on The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga, a number of texts on Yoga written specifically for a Western audience were published (Wehr, 1987). Yogananda (1955) exposed readers in the U.S. to *siddhis* (miraculous powers) that result from Yogic practice, the intoxicating love between devotee (student) and *guru* (teacher), and the value of surrender. *I am That* (Maharaj, 1973), *The Yoga Sûtras of Patanjali* (Saraswati, 1978), and the prolific publications of Sri Mata Amritananadamayi's non-profit organizations capture the oral tradition of discourse where a *guru* reinterprets the nuances of scripture, giving examples that reference the cultural historical context of devotees.

Light on Life (Iyengar, 2005), David Frawley's more than 30 books on Yoga, Ayurveda, Vedic Astrology, and more, and *The Yoga Tradition* (Singleton, 2014), are just a few of the texts that sought to introduce the philosophy, psychology, system of healing, cosmology, and theoretical framework of Yoga to Western readers. In contrast, texts such as *Integral Hatha Yoga* (Swami Satchidananda Saraswati, 1970), *The Heart of Yoga* (Desikachar, 1995), *Yoga*

Mind, Body, and Spirit: A Return to Wholeness (Farhi, 2000), *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (Translated by Swami Sivananda and Commentary by Swami Muktibodananda, 1998), *Light on Yoga* (Iyengar, 1975), and *Light on Pranayama* (Iyengar, 1985) read more like manuals on Yogic method. These texts describe and give specific instruction for the systemic practice of Yogic techniques. Some authors directly address the conflicts between the tradition of Yoga and modern life, while others emphasize the universal benefit of Yogic practices.

Yoga Journal, founded in 1975, indicated spreading interest in the practice Yoga as a growing market, and was part of a trend that turned the tradition into a spiritual commodity. By the mid-1990s, circulation of the journal reached 66,000, growing to 350,000 at the start of 2000. Readership is currently over 1,300,000 (Macy, 2010). *Yoga Journal* is now a media conglomerate that has an extensive website, produces educational DVDs for teachers and consumers, and hosts conferences devoted to Yoga, food, fitness, fashion, and beauty.

More recently, Yoga has become the subject of research and adopted as an adjunctive clinical practice by psychologists in the United States. This is evidenced in peer reviewed research on the value of Yoga to improve executive dysfunction or increase emotional regulation (Goethe, Keswani, & McAuley, 2016; Medina et al., 2015), or for the treatment of a variety of disorders such as depression, anxiety, and trauma, among others (Genovese & Fondran, 2016; Hopkins et al., 2016; Pradhan, Gray, Parikh, Akkireddi, & Pumariega, 2015). Furthermore, *Overcoming Trauma with Yoga: Reclaiming Your Body* (Emerson & Hopper, 2011) and *Trauma Sensitive Yoga in Therapy: Bringing the Body into Treatment* (Emerson, 2015) are two recent examples of guides for the application of Yoga within the clinical practice of U.S. psychology.

Historical figures. The hyper-individualistic nature of the U.S. appeared to fuel the trend of glorifying teachers above the teachings. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Yoga masters

began traveling West, attracting attention and followers. This began at the 1893 Parliament of Religions in Chicago, when Swami Vivekananda impressed attendees with his lectures on Yoga, Vedanta, and the connections between the world's religions (Feuerstein, 2013; Macy, 2014). Vivekananda international work raised the status of Hinduism to a major world religion by the late 19th century (Clarke, 2006).

In 1920, Paramahansa Yogananda traveled to the U.S. as India's delegate to an International Congress of Religious Liberals convening in Boston (Wendell, 1930) where he introduced the concept of Yoga as a psychological state or phenomena. He founded the Self-Realization Fellowship in 1920, which had a hand in the international dissemination of teachings and ancient practices of Yoga (Ghosh, 1980). In the early 1920s Yogananda lectured on the East Coast and embarked on a speaking tour across the U.S. in 1924 (Feuerstein, 2013). During this time, he attracted a number of celebrity followers including the daughter of Mark Twain (Ghosh, 1980). Yogananda was the first *guru* within the tradition of Yoga to spend the majority of his adult life in the U.S. Similarly, Ramana Maharshi became another widely popular Indian *guru* in the U.S. His influence began in the 1930s when his teaching initiated a fascination with the concept of spiritual enlightenment and modern-day enlightened masters (Wendell, 1930).

There is evidence to suggest that concepts introduced by Vivekananda, Yogananda, and Maharshi influenced the discourse of psychologists during the 1920s and 1930s. This is apparent in the work of Carl Rogers, who parted with Freud over the fundamental nature and moral development of human psychology, and also Maslow, who studied self-actualization as a basic human need. The initial emergence of the humanistic movement in psychology makes sense against a cultural backdrop inclusive of Yogic concepts within academic circles. Jung was undoubtedly influenced by the theoretical framework of Yoga due to his extensive travel through

India between 1925 and 1938. During this time, he observed the cultural traditions he encountered and their approach to psychological illness and healing (Hayman, 2001). This was evident in Jung's 1932 seminar on the Psychology of Kundalini Yoga (Wehr, 1987). Yoga gave Jung the theoretical justification he lacked to describe the development of higher consciousness. Without Yoga, Jung's insistence on the importance of symbolism, psychogenic phases, and the existence of shared consciousness may never have gained traction in the United States (Hayman, 2001).

The Yogic concept of *ahimsa* largely influenced the civil rights movement. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. drew heavily from the writing, teaching, and lived example of nonviolence demonstrated by Mahatma Gandhi (McAllister, 1982). Gandhi functioned as a powerful role model for King Jr., and inspired his unwavering adherence to spiritual virtues when engaging in political activism (McAllister, 1982).

The development of Ashtanga Yoga by Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, a popular Vinyāsa Yoga (flow of movement with breath) dramatically shifted the way Yoga was understood as well as its degree of availability (Donahaye, 2010). Ashtanga Yoga includes three different series of postures that are practiced sequentially, moving from simple to advanced. The secular, manualized, and aerobic nature of Vinyāsa Yoga highly appealed to Westerners, who flocked to Mysore to study with Jois (Donahaye, 2010). He gained further recognition by attracting celebrity students including Madonna, Sting, and Gwyneth Paltrow (Donahaye, 2010). In 1975, Jois stayed for four months in Encinitas, CA marking the beginning of Vinyāsa Yoga in the U.S. He returned to the U.S. several times over the course of 20 years to teach Ashtanga Yoga at different sites around the country (Donahaye, 2010).

B.K.S. Iyengar also developed his own style of Yoga which focused primarily on specific

methods for approaching posture and breathwork. Iyengar received a great deal of attention for his focus on injury recovery and correct alignment, and his writings employed Western scientific terminology (Singleton, 2014). Iyengar made his first visit to the U.S. in 1956, when he gave several lectures and demonstrations in Ann Arbor, Michigan (Singleton, 2014). After this, he visited the West regularly, and his schools began to emerge worldwide (Singleton, 2014). In 1966, Iyengar published his first book *Light on Yoga*, an international best-seller, followed by 14 other works. Iyengar became such an iconic symbol that the San Francisco board of supervisors named October 3rd, 2005 as B. K. S. Iyengar Day (Singleton, 2014). Currently, Iyengar is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as “a type of Hatha Yoga focusing on the correct alignment of the body, making use of straps, wooden blocks, and other objects as aids in achieving the correct postures” (Oxford University Press, n.d., para. 1). It is notable that Iyengar Yoga is more popular than Sivananda Yoga, which was one of the first systems of Yoga widely taught in the United States. Perhaps Sivananda Yoga did not gain comparable public recognition due to focus on purification practices; a part of the tradition predominately dissociated by practitioners in the U.S. This raises interesting questions about values and lifestyle choices that make the traditional practice of Yoga difficult.

Trends in the dissemination and practice of Yoga. Buddhist concepts and practices prominent in the early 1950s added zeal to the American fascination with enlightenment fueled by authors such as Ginsberg, Snyder, and Kerouac (Bergkamp, 2007). Westerners began traveling to India between the 1950s and 1970s (MacLean, 2008). The passage between Europe and India was one of the first international routes to popularize “alternative tourism” where the simple and frugal mode of travel mirrored the path of renunciation common to Yogic monks or mystics. This was counter to dominant socio-economic norms and mores of U.S. culture and

came out of a counter cultural movement that included frequent experimentation with hallucinogenic drugs and an interest in altered states of consciousness (MacLean, 2008). The disenchantment with the empty materialism, rigid gender roles, and limited interpersonal connection that characterized the era following World War II gave rise to a growing population looking for meaning not provided by secularism and capitalism (Cushman, 1995). This cultural context may well have given Yoga an exotic and mysterious allure.

The humanistic movement within psychology began to gain traction in the 1950s and with roots in phenomenology, existential psychology, and eastern philosophy (Cushman, 1995). Humanistic psychologists failed to credit transpersonal psychology and the theory used to explain the nature of human existence and consciousness as originating from Yoga and Buddhism. This appropriation of theory and philosophy laid the groundwork for a movement that would later become Mindfulness Based Psychology (Bergkamp, 2007).

As Yoga teachers traveled to the West and as Westerners studied Yoga in the East, the tradition shifted away from a moral and spiritual framework for living a good life, toward a manualized approach for individuals to attain physical prowess and lasting happiness. Westerners who trained in India were inspired and felt compelled to share their experience, teaching students upon their return to the U.S. Bypassing *gurus* as gatekeepers altered the expectation for teachers to have achieved a level of expertise and awakening. The *guru*, as a supervisory influence with regard to maintaining the cultural integrity of the tradition, has thus declined due in part to widespread misuse of power. The value placed on aspects of Yoga, such as service, surrender of worldly pleasures, and asceticism are still promoted by teachers coming from the East, but these teachings are widely ignored in the context of hyper-individualism and capitalism.

Since the late 1970s, Yoga studios opened all over the U.S., drastically changing the way the tradition is disseminated and understood. Yoga taught in the context of the U.S. has focused on culturally syntonetic aspects of the tradition, neglecting the philosophical concepts that call into question dominant cultural values or undermine socioeconomic infrastructure. While the intent behind founding the Yoga Alliance in 1997 was to ensure a high quality of training and teaching, in actuality, it functions as a mechanism of appropriation. The Yoga Alliance, a non-profit trade organization, has assumed the right to evaluate training programs and assign value via a credentialing system that recognizes individuals as teachers after only 200 hours of training. By presenting the dissemination of Yoga as acultural and ahistorical, The Yoga Alliance silently condones a reductionistic view of the tradition. How psychologists in the U.S. participate in the misrepresentation and appropriation of Yoga, how it is defined, understood, and the impact of practice within a dramatically different cultural and temporal context, has yet to be evaluated and is the focus of this work.

Statement of the Problem

During the 20th century, a reduced and instrumental Yoga has become a social artifact of U.S. society, as its increasing dissemination and practice is now taken for granted as an aspect of modern life. Instead of Yoga being understood as an ancient and multifaceted tradition, its widespread acceptance and application occurred only after being reduced to a series of decontextualized techniques. Yoga, void of its cultural context and reduced to technique, was easily manualized, facilitating the evaluation of its merit as a tool for psychological healing using Western scientific research methods. Concurrently, the most valued and frequently prescribed psychotherapy treatments are manualized (Cushman, 2010; Goodman, 2014), making the clinical application of Yoga seamless.

The reduction of Yoga to a manualized technique reifies the dominant epistemology of the U.S. in general, and psychology in particular. Hinged on scientific objectivity and absolute truth, this epistemology results in a failure to identify the moral and ontological assumptions that constitute Yoga, or evaluate whether these assumptions support or call into question those assumptions that constitute psychology in the U.S. This evasion of genuine encounter with another tradition halts the adaptive evolution of psychology in the U.S. Cushman (1991) explained that “psychology’s modern scientific agenda is both philosophically impossible and politically dangerous” (p. 206). Unrecognized cultural values that inform the development of method inadvertently produce results that sustain pre-established roles of power and privilege. Similarly, the theory and practice of psychology in the U.S. describe ailments as independent from prerequisite cultural and historical conditions and, subsequently, prescribe treatments that sustain and perpetuate those conditions.

Mainstream quantitative and qualitative research regarding the efficacy of Yoga as a tool for psychological healing is consistent with this pattern. The paucity of critique of prescriptive and proscriptive implications of treatments that include Yoga creates unknowing compliance with embedded cultural values. While there is a move to acknowledge and articulate nuances of the multifaceted tradition of Yoga (Christopher et al., 2014; Matthijs, 2011; & Misra et al., 2011), U.S. psychologists have not yet recognized Yoga has having its own legitimate system of psychology, nor has Yogic psychology been given serious consideration.

Importance and Purpose of the Study

In the United States, mental illness is perceived as existing inside the self-contained individual, while the cultural and historical conditions that give rise to such ailment remain largely invisible (Bordo, 2003; Benjamin, 2004; Cushman, 2012; Fowers, 2010; Harrist and

Richardson, 2014; Layton, 2004, 2010, & 2013; Samelson, 1981; Sugarman, 2015). This perspective justifies the pre-existing federal budget for mental health services and agencies, the interests of insurance and pharmaceutical companies, the power and privilege of mental health professionals, and the system of managed care. Due to the desire to affect therapeutic change using the most time efficient and cost-effective means, the system of managed care has equated the quality of services with fidelity to manualized interventions (Cushman & Guilford, 2000; Goodman, 2016). Furthermore, research methodology, curricula of training institutions, and clinical application of psychology in the U.S. is bound in understandings that arose during the Enlightenment era which conceal (and justify) the enactment of academic imperialism (Cushman, 1995; Smith, 1999; Samelson, 1981). The consumption and commodification of traditions like Yoga are an expression of this phenomenon. This study is important because it breaks the cyclic and self-fulfilling nature of this enactment by modeling disciplinary self-reflection and critique. Rather than communicating ahistorical, transcultural truths about healing, this study is vital to our understanding the psychology indigenous to Yoga and the psychology indigenous to the U.S. as artifacts that normalize and support the sociopolitical arrangements of a given era. It is important to think critically about the moral values these traditions communicate, lest psychologists perpetuate an instrumental world that creates the very suffering we wish to alleviate.

Philosophical hermeneutics takes a political stance with regards to the unrecognized cultural values embedded in our methods and pre-understandings (Ludlam, 2007). Heidegger described humans as born into a context of shared understandings and practices, a tradition of interpretation against which our theories, techniques, and actions make sense (Richardson et al., 1999). In addition, Gadamer (1975) revealed how the product of method always promotes the

pre-existing understandings inherent in the method, and fails to generate novel thought. An approach guided by the tenants of philosophical hermeneutics requires a recognition of psychology as indigenous to the U.S. (rather than universal) making room for the serious consideration of other indigenous psychologies. The U.S. conception of mental illness, treatment, competency, and training, is being practiced and exported globally (Christopher et al., 2014). Because of this, it is particularly important to evaluate the values communicated in the theories and practices of U.S. psychology. A primary aim of this project is to consider whether contact with traditions of the other necessarily results in dissociation or appropriation, or if genuine dialogue between traditions can foster disciplinary refinement and reflexivity.

Description of the Study

I examined Yoga as a tradition inclusive of its own system of psychology as compared with how Yoga is understood and utilized by the tradition of psychology in the U.S. I accomplished this by engaging in a qualitative textual interpretation of two source texts on Yoga, and ten articles on Yoga in psychology. I selected the two source texts based on their significance within the Yogic tradition, as well as the breadth of their dissemination. Because this study sought to evaluate the tradition of Yoga with a specific eye to Yogic philosophy and psychology, I selected texts representative of two philosophically divergent and highly impactful schools of thought with regard to best practice guidelines. In an effort to evaluate the dominant discourse on Yoga, I selected articles based on their impact factor, a system that ranks manuscripts based on how frequently they are cited in other academic journals. Furthermore, because I was interested in how psychologists in the U.S. understand, communicate about, and utilize Yoga, my selection criteria included research funded by institutions in the U.S., articles

written by psychologists that practice in the U.S., describe research that took place in the U.S., and were published in journals located in the U.S.

I used hermeneutic interpretation as an approach to qualitative textual analysis. Interpretation occurred at the intersection between Gadamerian hermeneutic philosophy, the content of selected literature, and the pre-judgments about Yoga and psychology that determine my range of vision as an interpreter born, raised, and indoctrinated within U.S. society. Consistent with the tenants of hermeneutics, I situated the results of analyses within a cultural, historical, and moral frame with particular attention to the tendency to dissociate and appropriate aspects of one's own and another's tradition.

In this study, I interpreted Yoga as it came to light in widely utilized source texts and peer reviewed journal articles. These texts and articles are understood as living documents that defined and continue to define the meaning attributed to, and guide the practice or utilization of, Yoga. Just as psychologists simultaneously embody and reinforce cultural values, these texts are cultural artifacts that espouse an ideal understanding and application of Yoga. The source texts suggest the ideal attitude and behavior of someone encountering the tradition of Yoga, specific guidelines for how to practice Yoga, and a philosophical or theoretical framework for how to think about and understand their experiences. The articles promote the inclusion of Yoga in psychotherapy or therapeutic contexts, describe manualized versions of Yoga to facilitate future research or integration with other therapeutic modalities, and articulate the value or benefit of Yoga.

I focused my source text analysis on what they communicate about Yogic philosophy and psychology, and sought to identify the dissociated moral and ontological assumptions that require the psychology indigenous to the U.S. to engage in disciplinary reflexivity. My analysis

of the articles focused on how Yoga is understood and applied by psychologists at this moment in U.S. history, making clear the aspects of the tradition that are marked as desirable, the mechanisms of appropriation, and what these say about the moral and ontological assumptions of psychology. Following the work of previous literature (Bordo, 2003; Benjamin, 2004; Cushman, 2013a, 2013b, & 2013c; Fowers, 2010; Harrist & Richardson, 2014; Layton, 2010 & 2013; Samelson, 198; Sugarman, 2015), I was interested in the increasing inclusion of Yoga in the industry of psychotherapy, and how this industry is articulated and perpetuated through manualized treatment. While psychologists in the U.S. intend to use psychotherapy interventions to provide aid, our insistence that our theories and methods are universal and superior to those indigenous to the communities we serve is experienced as an arrogant and ignorant imposition (Christopher et al., 2014, Harrist & Richardson, 2014). Ideally, this study provides a model for how to recognize U.S. psychology as indigenous and to shift away from the tendency to dissociate, appropriate, and impose upon other indigenous psychologies, toward a willingness to consider and be influenced by these psychologies.

Research Questions

The central questions guiding my analysis of Source Yogic texts were: (a) What do I value?; (b) What is challenging for me?; (c) What theories or philosophical precepts can I perceive about the Yogic concept of mind, psychological illness, and healing?; and (d) What are the healing technologies that Yoga promotes?

The central questions guiding my analysis of the ten exemplar articles were: (a) What is the dominant discourse about Yoga in U.S. psychology?; (b) How do psychologists in the U.S. define Yoga?; (c) How do U.S. psychologists talk about Yoga?; (d) How are U.S. psychologists

applying Yoga?; (e) What do U.S. psychologists find desirable relative to Yoga?; and (f) What are the mechanisms of appropriation?

I asked additional specific research questions embedded in the remaining chapters in order to clarify the cultural and historical context of the literature and moral judgments about Yoga that were described in the texts.

CHAPTER III: HERMENEUTIC INQUIRY

Theoretical Framework: Philosophic Hermeneutics

This study is grounded in philosophic hermeneutics and draws on the art of interpretation as an approach to literature analysis. Hermeneutic literature analysis involves a rigorous, multi-layered process of reading and re-reading, situating the text and its author within their cultural and historical context, while remaining aware that interpretations of the text cannot be separated from the predominantly unrecognized moral framework and pre-understandings of the reader. Philosophical hermeneutics is a recent iteration of a long-standing tradition, predominantly attributed to the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer's work (1975) began with his interpretation of ontological hermeneutics, an iteration of hermeneutics credited to his teacher Martin Heidegger (Heidegger, 1996; Warnke, 1987). Hermeneutic philosophy is described briefly below, along with identified presuppositions embodied in the act of interpretation. These assumptions comprise my theoretical framework. As their opposition to Cartesian dualism and the doctrine of objectivity sets them apart from most scientific inquiry and dissertation research, they warrant further elaboration.

A brief history of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics, originally a form of scriptural study, reflection, and interpretation, is rooted in similar traditions such as *Midrash* (commentary on Hebrew scripture) and Stoicism (school of Hellenistic philosophy). Hermeneutics was first recognized by European monastics during the Protestant Reformation (1545 to 1563) when the power to interpret scripture was given to the church (Richardson et al., 1999). Notably, the monastic tradition in Europe can also be understood as an early form of academia in the West.

Romantic hermeneutics. The era of Romanticism began in 1770, peaked in 1820, waned in the early 1900s, and represented a philosophical break from Enlightenment era rationalism,

empiricism, and the pursuit of control via objective method. Romantic philosophers described life as passionately subjective, invariably mysterious, emotional, and spiritual. This philosophical break reflected changes in the sociopolitical landscape of Europe, such as the French revolution, and the birth of secularism. Two authors, Schleiermacher and Dilthey, capture the influence of German Romanticism on the tradition of Hermeneutics during this era. German theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768 to 1834) was largely responsible for the widening the application of hermeneutic interpretation to the myriad forms of human discourse (Polkinghorne, 1983). Schleiermacher articulated the following first two tenants of teleological hermeneutics: (a) interpretation of text must reference the original language shared by the author and his audience, and (b) each word in a passage is in dynamic relationship and no word can be understood in isolation (Polkinghorne, 1983). Wilhelm Dilthey (1833 to 1911) later dubbed Schleiermacher's description of hermeneutic inquiry the hermeneutic circle and focused on the interdependence between parts and the whole body of work, where apart they are rendered meaningless (Polkinghorne, 1983).

The placed value on the psychological inner domain of the individual during the Romantic era is evident in Dilthey's (1978) work. Dilthey rejected the ahistorical agenda of Enlightenment era philosophers, and argued that humans cannot be understood using methods designed to investigate the natural sciences. He insisted that a reductionist view of humans as inert matter, devoid of subjective experience and intention, was both irrational and dangerous (Richardson et al., 1999). Rather, Dilthey insisted that to understand life as the neutral outcome of causal interactions between independent objects divorces us from a world of relational meaning (Polkinghorne, 1983). Dilthey (1978) further suggested that humanity is best understood within a social-historical matrix, where cultural artifacts characterize our subjective

experience of life (Polkinghorne, 1983). This paved the way for recognizing self, other, and life as constitutive, embedded in a continual process of interpretation and reinterpretation (Richardson et al., 1999). Despite his contribution to Romantic hermeneutics, Dilthey's desire to develop a formal method for the social sciences free from the inexorable prejudice of the interpreter, revealed the ongoing influence of Enlightenment era rationalism and empiricism on his work.

Ontological hermeneutics. Ontological hermeneutics describes a world where people are born into traditions of interpretation and shared understandings that are conveyed through language. The German philosopher Martin Heidegger distinguished Ontological hermeneutics from Romantic hermeneutics (Richardson et al., 1999). Heidegger (1996) rejected Dilthey's (1978) quest for method and focused instead on the phenomena of understanding as fundamental to human existence. Heidegger saw knowing and being as inseparable, and suggested that to interpret is to be human. For Heidegger (1996), formal method was a futile attempt to transcend doubt, and the inescapability of doubt and entanglement was a vital component in genuine understanding. He argued that no pure truth exists out of context, and that understanding cannot be achieved by overcoming the embedded human condition (Polkinghorne, 1983).

Heidegger saw philosophy as lost in the content of beings while overlooking the meta-analytic question of being. Heidegger's seminal text *Being and Time* advocated for the interpretation of the interpreter and argued that being *is* time (Gadamer, 1975). He proposed that the social practices of an era create a clearing that makes recognizable the people, objects, ideas, and events that exist within it. Because this clearing facilitates our lives, our being, and our becoming, it is as natural and familiar as breathing, and its nuances escape our vision. Only when we encounter something unexpected or foreign might we begin to wonder about the

practices, arrangements, and ideologies that constitute given aspects of our sociopolitical lives. To approach a cultural artifact hermeneutically, one must situate it in the clearing from which it arose, observe its role within or relationship to that clearing, wonder about the dominant ideologies and political arrangements of a world where such an artifact exists, and finally the felt experience of living in such a world. To provide a concrete example, psychological theories and techniques can be understood as cultural artifacts. Varied cultural and historical contexts have given rise to myriad explanations for mental illness, such as the consequences of trauma or disrupted attachment, divine will, deficits in an individual's neurological development or executive functioning, spirit possession, constitutional or elemental imbalance, or as a reflection of some other indigenous model for disease. In a clinical sense, as our conceptualization moves from one etiology to another, so does our understanding of and experience with a person. These understandings result in the development of theories and practices, determine treatment expectations and outcomes, and impact the experience of the person being treated. Thus, social discourse is lived or embodied and its influence ripples outward to touch every aspect of the world we inhabit.

Philosophical hermeneutics. “The true locus of hermeneutics is this in-between” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 295). In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer (1975) applied ontological hermeneutics to critique the scientific agenda of modern psychology. Gadamer (1975) described the inescapability of the interpreter and how the doctrine of objectivity is logically impossible. He explained that no knowledge exists outside the relationship between knower and known. Gadamer suggested that the previous experiences, pre-understandings, or prejudices of the interpreter are central to interpretation, as a reflection of the context in which interpretation occurs. While recognizing that the interpreter has limited access or conscious awareness of their

prejudices, these can be observed more readily in response to the subject of interpretation, as preference or aversion, and can also be evaluated in the interpretations drawn.

Gadamer (1975) described interpretation of text as a dialectic encounter between text and interpreter, limited only by the range of vision of both author and interpreter, their horizon of understanding. The concept of one's horizon captures the cultural and historical clearing in which they are situated, one's position and what they can and cannot see as a result (Gadamer, 1975). A horizon delineates what parts of the text are perceptible to the reader. Gadamer (1975) dubbed the intersection of the interpreter's prejudice, expectations, and the meanings communicated by the text a fusion of horizons. The felt experience of a fusion of horizons might be described as the experience of being between what is familiar and what is foreign.

Spatial metaphors. In following with Lord (2014), the remaining sections of this chapter include repeated reference to the spatial metaphors of Gadamer's horizon and Heidegger's clearing. As interpreters, we are born into a landscape of values, understandings, practices, and traditions or modes of interpretation particular to our native culture and historical era. The meaning of this landscape and how to move within it is conveyed to us through language, illuminating and adding further definition to the topography. We may perceive ourselves as separate from our environment, but our capacity for introspection, understanding, and very existence is perceptible to us and communicable to others only in reference to this shared context. As within so without, causing this landscape to become so familiar that we take it for granted and mistakenly understand it in absolute terms. This landscape is Heidegger's clearing.

Our demographic and socioeconomic location within the landscape can determine the ease with which we move within the clearing. As we move, the quality of our dialectic interactions can influence the range of what we can see. This range of vision is Gadamer's

horizon. It is possible to overlook what is new, perceiving only what is immediately recognizable when exploring uncharted territory. Gadamer described hermeneutic interpretation as walking to the edge of the clearing, attempting to see beyond the horizon, and contemplating what we see with deep consideration (1975). Our willingness to be influenced by what we encounter, to notice our automatic response, and allow it to call into question what we feel is unquestionably true, allows for a fusion of horizons that expands our range of vision. Bringing our prejudices into conscious awareness by inquiring into our automatic preferences and aversions makes possible new interpretations instead of unconscious reproductions of old interpretations. The expanding horizon alters not only what the individual interpreter can perceive, it also increases the vision of all others who occupy the same cultural-historical clearing. While the constructed nature of clearing makes room for the terrain to be altered, this requires a shift in the moral vision, and the social, economic, and political infrastructure of society. This type of radical change creates uncertainty that can be threatening to those who stand to gain from sustaining the status quo, and thus often evokes fierce resistance (Cushman, 1991).

Occupying the space between. Hermeneutic literature analysis involves tacking back and forth between the horizons of the text and interpreter. This movement ideally coalesces into a fusion of these horizons, or an experience of the text as simultaneously familiar and foreign that stimulates novel interpretations. Stigliano (1989) described this process as oscillating back and forth between distancing (experiencing the text as situated within its own historical discourse) and appropriation (experiencing the text as a mirror of the interpreter's prejudice). Neither pure distancing nor complete appropriation results in novel thought. By working to historically situate text and acknowledging our own historicity and prejudice (foregrounding) we make it

possible for understanding as an event that happens to us.

Data Collection & Analysis: Dialogue with Text and the Art of Interpretation

In Gadamerian tradition, the broad purpose of this study was to ask the following: Must contact between two traditions result in sublimation of one by the other? Guided by the theories and practices of the hermeneutic tradition, this study seeks to achieve three aims: (a) to evaluate how the tradition of Yoga has been impacted by its contact with U.S. culture in general and the tradition of psychology in particular; (b) to articulate the unquestioned values, assumptions, and tenants enacted by psychologists in the U.S. that inadvertently result in the appropriation of what is valued and dissociation of what is challenging in Yoga; and (c) to articulate previously dissociated and equally legitimate Yogic conceptualizations of the human psyche, psychological disorders, and ideal healing techniques. This is done in an effort to lay the groundwork for a genuine encounter between traditions.

I identified themes in the dominant discourse on Yoga between psychologists in the United States. I viewed peer reviewed articles written by U.S. psychologists describing research on the production of theoretical models and the clinical application of Yoga as exemplars of this discourse.

Instead of asking positivist and ontic questions such as “How does Yoga change our brains?” or, “What symptoms are best alleviated by Yoga interventions?” I chose to examine the world where these questions make sense. The hermeneutic researcher is a cultural anthropologist whose subject is the text and whose aim is to describe the experience of living in a society that would create such a text. I explored conceptualizations of human psyche, psychological disorder, and ideal healing techniques within the tradition of Yoga, as well as which of these conceptualizations and techniques were appropriated by the tradition of psychology in the United

States, and what our preferences say about the field of psychology in the U.S. The interpretation of data took place at the intersection of the literature reviewed and selected for analysis, the tradition of philosophic hermeneutics, and my prejudices about both Yoga and psychology. Results were discussed within the historical, political, and moral context of the study itself.

The choice to title this section Hermeneutic Inquiry (rather than Method) was intentional. The rejection of reductive methodology and the adoption an interpretive process that recognizes its limitations, maintains fidelity to philosophic hermeneutics, and retains qualitative rigor is exemplified by a number of pertinent scholars (Chang, 2010; Leonard, 1993; McCoy & Barrett, 2000; Stigliano, 1989). What follows is a synthesis of these scholars' procedural description. While the explanation of how I applied the principles of dialogue and interpretation is my own, the structure, sequence, and headers are adapted from Lord (2014) in an effort to provide structure for the method of the inquiry.

Spiral 1: Entering the circle: Topic engagement. Interpretation is initiated when the interpreter is moved, affected or “addressed” by a question or an issue (Gadamer, 1975). Being engaged or captivated is another way of describing this experience (Stigliano, 1989; Chang, 2010). An important initial step for interpretation is acknowledgement of the perspective of the interpreter, and the reason for the examination. The integration of Yoga and psychology was the reason I pursued a doctoral degree. I want to understand the world that gave rise to Yoga as an intervention rather than a tradition, so that I can be a conscious participant in this world, a psychologist capable of bridging these two traditions without appropriation. I interpreted from this stance, from this location in the clearing. Before engaging in dialogue with the selected texts and exemplars, I foregrounded the experiences that led to my being engaged by this topic. I refer to topic engagement as the entrance point and the subsequent phases as a tacking back and forth

around the hermeneutic circle of interpretation.

Spiral 2: Text identification. Selecting the source texts was a lengthy process of navigating the vast body of literature on Yoga dating back to antiquity. The tradition of Yoga is multifaceted and nuanced. The body of knowledge constitutive of the theory, science, and medicine indigenous to Yoga is extensive given these are only three of its many faces. Text identification included a process of weighing the influence of different texts, the availability of good translations, and the aspects of the tradition that the texts focused on.

Spiral 3: Foregrounding. Foregrounding is the recognition and disclosure of conscious assumptions relevant to the inquiry, allowing the interpreter to discern between their own context and the tradition of the text and its meanings. For this study, I foregrounded the assumptions of philosophic hermeneutics guiding the approach to analysis in this chapter and my personal experiences with Yoga and psychology in the next. I provided a brief history of Yoga, as a foregrounding for the overall analysis. Finally, I provided foregrounding for the literature selected to provide context for the results and discussion of themes identified.

Spiral 4: Immersion in texts with research questions. The immersion phase of data analysis includes a rigorous reading and re-reading of selected texts, witnessing and documenting my myriad interpretations and their evolution within the context of previously foregrounded assumptions. During the first read of the text I simply recorded my impressions and concepts that captured my attention. I noted ideas that felt familiar and others that felt foreign or that I struggled to grasp. I then re-read the text while considering specific questions and tracking questions that arose spontaneously. During the final phase of analysis, I considered the overarching questions central to the investigation.

As I asked questions of the text, I tried to hear what the text was saying by considering

the references to the historical discourse from which it arose, and by noticing how the text reflected the historical discourse I participate in as an interpreter. In hearing the answers coming from these vantage points, I found myself in dialogue with the text by moving between my historicity and prejudices, and the world that necessitated such a text.

Spiral 5: Data analysis as hermeneutic inquiry. My analysis of the text was guided by philosophic hermeneutics, the literature previously outlined, and my cultural and historical prejudice. A central aim of hermeneutic inquiry is to recognize and articulate the values communicated by the prescriptive and proscriptive nature of social practices so that new modes of wrestling with what instigated the investigation emerge. In other words, interpretation is the identification of patterns of meaning through the multilayered reading and reflection process constitutive of text immersion and conceptualization in the form of themes.

Thematic interpretation. During the process of multilayered reading and reflecting, commonalities or themes arose within and across source material and exemplars. Commonalities that repeated across source material or across exemplars were titled shared themes, and those unique to each document were titled according to their origin. While it is obvious to consider what is overtly captured in language, hermeneutic interpretation also asks the interpreter to consider the silences, or what is not being said. Hence, this thematic inquiry included query into what was absent from the texts. Silences and exclusions have a way of communicating what is dissociated, what we are unwilling to consider. In this study, the disavowal (i.e., simultaneous knowing and not knowing) of certain aspects of the tradition of Yoga point to the assumptions psychologists in the U.S. are most resistant to questioning. I did not include a separate analytic category for silences, but noted what was included and excluded in my discussion of themes.

Thematic dialogue. Unlike Lord (2014), I did not engage in the identification of

paradigmatic objects, as this was not central to the purpose of this inquiry. Instead, I placed the themes identified in the source literature and the exemplars into dialogue, fostering to the best of my ability an initial encounter between the tradition of Yoga and U.S. psychology. This encounter was not intended to answer each of the questions that arose, but to wrestle with them and generate further questions that would ideally fuel an ongoing and meaningful dialogue about the dynamic interplay between these traditions. Furthermore, this encounter served a similar purpose to the identification of paradigmatic objects, as the insights garnered through dialogue are intended to cause their respective clearings to be restructured in some way.

Question generation. Due to the import given to question generation by Gadamer, it is a topic worthy of explicit recognition within the interpretive process (Lord, 2014). The texts invariably generate lines of inquiry that are not resolved during analysis. These quandaries are akin to unformulated experience in that their resolution may necessitate further enactment and reflection (Stern, 2010). These questions emerge as meaningful during the reconstructive phase where their significance is addressed.

Spiral 6: Reconstruction (Conclusion). Reconstruction is a final reflection on the results in reference to the literature review, the cultural historicity of each document, foregrounded philosophical frame and personal experience, and the horizon of interpreter's socio-political culture. In this phase, I sought to reconstruct the tradition of Yoga, by recognizing the system of psychology it includes as equal to the system of psychology I participate in. I did this by specifically highlighting examples of theoretical precepts and practices that psychologists in the U.S. worth consideration, in efforts to assist my tradition in ripening into an ethics for encountering other traditions. This section concludes with a discussion of the moral, cultural and political implications of these results within the framework

of the overarching research question: Must contact between two traditions result in sublimation of one by the other? More specifically, must psychologists in the U.S. appropriate practices from the Yogic tradition, and how might it instead be influenced by the tenants of Yogic psychology, further refining our conceptualization of what is normal, healthy, and good?

CHAPTER IV: MATERIALS

Source Texts

Given the myriad nature of the Yogic tradition, I sought to choose widely influential texts that focused on theory and practice to facilitate a dialogue with the ten articles selected as exemplars of the current discourse on Yoga by psychologists in the U.S., as these would likely share a similar focus. This is likely because of the four schools of Yoga, people in the U.S. are primarily exposed to Raja Yoga (the path of physical and mental control), which tends to focus more on concrete theory and practice. The other three schools of Yoga: Jnana (the path of knowledge), Karma (the path of service), and Bhakti (the path of devotion) focus on philosophy and study of scripture, ethics, and the phenomenology of divine love, respectively. Furthermore, I wanted two examples of divergent lineages of Yoga to represent the varied interpretations of theory and approaches to practice within the tradition.

Yoga Sûtras

The first source text I selected was *The Yoga Sûtras of Patanjali*, which is widely recognized as the first text to present Yoga's theory, practice, and phenomenology of spiritual progress in an organized and systematic way. This text is subsequently referred to as the Yoga Sûtras or YS. The text was so influential that it defined an era in the history of the tradition of Yoga that Feuerstein (2013) called Classical Period. It is unknown whether Patanjali was one person or several using the same title, and the sûtras themselves were thought to have been written between 5000 BCE and 300 CE (Feuerstein, 2013). Additionally, the prescriptive and proscriptive code of conduct communicated in the Sûtras are an expression of Vedantic values (stemming from Vedic scripture). The translation I selected is an example of the oral tradition of scripture being interpreted and disseminated by the *guru*, where disciples are encouraged to

wrestle with and query in open discourse. The text itself is the synthesis of numerous recorded teachings by Sri Swami Satchidananda on the meaning of each sūtra and discussions with his disciples regarding their application and import.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika

The second source text I selected was *The Hatha Yoga Pradipika* by Swatmarama. This text is subsequently referred to as HYP. Its import is related to a philosophical debate that resulted in a rift within the tradition over two (*yama* and *niyama*) of the eight limbs of Raja Yoga. Raja Yoga is divided into eight limbs, *yama* (restrictions), *niyama* (observances), *asana* (postures including the *bandhas* and *mudras* [locks, and gestures]), *pranayama* (breathing practices), *pratyahara* (sense withdrawal), *dharana* (concentration practices), *dyana* (meditation), and *samadhi*. Some factions felt the beneficial endemic checks of Vedantic values were vital to communicate at the outset of practice, while others felt that without first purifying the body, a moralistic imposition of restrictions and observances resulted in intrapsychic splitting. This rift was an extension of the divergent lineages of Vedanta and Tantra over how the body is conceptualized and utilized in practice. From a Vedantic perspective, the body is part of the illusion of duality, where the senses present obstacles to spiritual evolution in the form of attachment and aversion. From a Tantric perspective, the body is an expression of divine consciousness, and rather than feed the cycle of repression/indulgence, the senses should be integrated into spiritual practice. The creation of Hatha Yoga, widely popular in the U.S., was the result of these philosophic differences. While it does not denounce *yama* and *niyama*, Hatha Yoga does not emphasize these teachings, mentioning them as qualities and modes of being that arise spontaneously as a result of purification. Hatha Yoga prescribes the practice of *asana*, *bandha*, *mudra*, *pranayama*, and *shatkarma* (the six yogic techniques of purification) to ready

the bodymind for *dharana*, *dyana*, and *samadhi*. The myriad styles of Yoga in the U.S., such as Anusara, Baptiste, Ashtanga, and Iyengar, are manualized variations of Hatha Yoga that primarily teach *asana*, *pranayama*, and *dharana*. While evidence of these practices date back to antiquity, The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* by Swatmarama is the first manualized presentation of hatha Yoga. The original Sanskrit verses were likely authored by many and communicated orally, impossible to date, but were compiled by Maharishi Swatmarama during the early 14th Century (Feuerstein, 2013). In the translation I selected, Swami Satyananda converted the Sanskrit verses to English, and his student Swami Muktibodhananda provided a thorough commentary on each verse.

Exemplar Articles

The selection of ten articles as exemplars of the current discourse on Yoga by psychologists in the U.S. was comparably much simpler. Articles were selected using the [EBSCOhost] PsycINFO database. Evidenced-based, peer reviewed journal articles make available research findings that impact theories, doctrines and widely accepted or practiced contemporary psychotherapy treatments. The terms evidence based and peer reviewed are the qualifying descriptors assigned to literature that is considered most valid and reliable by APA, psychology's governing or regulatory agency in the U.S. Thus, journal articles that meet the above criteria communicate the political, moral, and social values generally held by psychologists in the U.S. The ideal execution of and participation in therapy described in journals indoctrinates providers and patients into the practice and culture of psychology. As such, widely cited journal articles can be understood as social artifacts that provide basic guidelines for human beings in a world where psychologists have power and privilege of determining what is normal, healthy, and good. Therefore, I limited my selection of articles in

the following ways.

Selection criteria. I conducted a search and selected ten articles based on whether they met the following criteria (from most to least significant): (a) investigated the theoretical significance, clinical benefit, or the application of Yoga to address a specific psychological concern, the needs of a specific population, or its efficacy within a specific context, (b) published between 2015 and 2016, (c) evidence-based and peer-reviewed, (d) the main author is a psychologist indoctrinated in the U.S., and who lived/practiced in the U.S. at the time the article was written and published, and (e) research was sponsored, hosted, and conducted in the U.S. Articles that met all other criteria were ranked in order of impact factor for the journal in which they were published, and the top ten were selected. Impact factor is a rating system that tracks the average number of times a journal is cited during the course of three to five years.

Because this study focused on how Yoga is understood, discussed, and utilized by psychologists in the United States, articles ranged from inquiry into the specific mechanisms in Yoga that produce psychological benefit, to articles that evaluated Yoga as a form of brain training, to articles that proposed a new treatment model that combined Yoga with other evidence-based approaches. While each article has a specific context, all ten articles emerged in the U.S. during our current era and communicate moral, social, and political messages about the experience of being human in the U.S. today.

The source texts and exemplar articles are detailed further in Chapter V, and a list of citations for the exemplar articles is provided in Table 1 (see Appendix B).

CHAPTER V: CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOURCE TEXTS AND EXEMPLAR ARTICLES

Yoga Sûtras of Patanjali

This section details the context, development, and background information for the first primary source text. This includes a cultural and historical context for the source as a whole and a description of its development.

Context

The original sūtras. The marked impact of Patanjali's Yoga Sûtras (YS or the Sûtras) was so significant in India, it became the primary symbol for an entire era in the history of Yoga dubbed the Classical period by Feuerstein (2013). This first systematic presentation of Yoga, composed around 200 CE, organized the practice of Yoga into an eight-limbed path outlining concrete instructions involved in the practice of Yoga and stages in the experience of *samadhi*. This text is emblematic of an emerging drive to document and present the tenants of Yoga in a more systematic and methodical manner. In this way, the Sûtras stand out against poetic, subjective, and experiential descriptions of Yoga in the epic narratives of previous eras. YS also initiated the shift from morality to methodology, paving the way for the tradition to be understood in instrumental terms. This is unfortunate given the primary focus of YS on the moral and theoretical framework of Yoga.

The Classical period also witnessed the tradition of Yoga branch into four schools or paths, *Jnana* Yoga (the path of knowledge), *Karma* Yoga (the path of selfless service), *Raja* Yoga (the path of discipline), and *Bhakti* Yoga (the path of devotion). Of the four schools, Raja Yoga, the path of physical and mental control, has had the widest impact on U.S. culture. Patanjali's eight limbs succinctly described the theory and phenomenology of Raja Yoga

(Zambito, 1992). Furthermore, the prescriptive *yama* and proscriptive *niyama* code of conduct communicated in the first two of the eight limbs is an overt reference to the moral framework of Yoga previously mentioned.

Patanjali. Notably, Patanjali did not write the sūtras, rather, he compiled selected teachings that were initially communicated orally from teacher to student, or were referenced in literature. The authors of previous eras often remained anonymous, renouncing public recognition or the concept of intellectual property. Thus, little is known about Patanjali or his life, aside from him being a scholar of the Samkya school of Hindu philosophy who is believed to have lived between the 2nd and 4th century CE. A trend emerged later in the classical period where greater import was given to authors, teachers, and spiritual leaders, their lives documented and catalogued. This can be seen in the prestige now attributed to Patanjali, who is often referred to as the “father of Yoga” for the widespread and continuous influence of YS (Feuerstein, 2013).

The development of the text. The following information about the development of the text, Sri Swami Satchidananda, and Yogaville came directly from the editorial director of Integral Yoga Publications and Media, Rev. Prem Anjali Ph.D. Sri Swami Satchidananda hand-wrote the translations of each Sutra and gave a series of talks on the sutras which were then transcribed. While these teachings are sourced in the oral tradition that encourages disciples to wrestle with scripture being interpreted and presented to them by their *guru*, the transmission of the theory, moral guidelines, and practical application of Yoga was the traditional means of communicating and disseminating the tradition.

The translated sutras were sent to a scholar in India (Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan, University of Madras) for verification. Upon confirmation, Swami Satchidananda reviewed all the

transcriptions, highlighting salient points to be utilized as commentary. These compiled commentaries were then edited for grammar and clarity by Rev. Bidya Bonne, with the assistance of six other senior students, the majority of whom were professional writers and editors. The final manuscript was then reviewed and corrections were made by Swami Satchidananda prior to printing. While I cannot comment on the other disciples involved in the development of the text, or the prejudices that may have influenced their work, these factors were mediated by the gatekeeping role of a *guru*.

Since the original publication, and after Swami Satchidananda's passing, some of the Devanagari script was updated, Sanskrit definitions expanded, and the text rendered gender-neutral. These changes were included in the latest edition from 2012. All editions were published by Integral Yoga Publications; a professional publishing company owned by Satchidananda Ashram Yogaville, a global organization. Satchidananda's book on the sutras is one of two main texts used by almost all professional Yoga Teacher Training courses in English-speaking countries. Furthermore, the text has been translated into French, German, Italian, and Chinese, and is widely used for teacher trainings in countries where these languages are spoken.

Integral Yoga® was founded in 1966 and now is Integral Yoga® International. Yogaville was founded in 1979. There were earlier ashrams in California, Connecticut, and Australia, all of which were closed when Yogaville was established in Virginia. Today, there are over 30 Integral Yoga Institutes and Centers on six continents, with international headquarters at Satchidananda Ashram–Yogaville® in Virginia, USA.

Sri Swami Satchidananda. Sri Swami Satchidananda was one of the first Yoga masters to bring the classical Yoga tradition to the West. After being invited to America in 1966 by the iconic pop artist Peter Max, Swami Satchidananda taught Yoga postures to Americans and

introduced them to meditation, vegetarianism, and the core facets of a compassionate lifestyle. Three years later, he led some half a million American youth in chanting OM, when he delivered the official opening remarks at the 1969 Woodstock Music and Art Festival, and he became known as “the Woodstock Guru.”

Swami Satchidananda was born on December 22nd in 1914 during the month known as *Margali*, the Dawn of the *Devas*. He was the second son of Sri Kalyanasundaram Gounder and his wife Srimati Velammai. Their home had always been a meeting place for poets, musicians, philosophers and astrologers. *Sannyasis* (monks) and holy men passing through the area were directed to the home of Sri Kalyanasundaram and Srimati Velammai for food and lodging. From the time he was a little boy, Sri Gurudev (then known as "Ramaswamy") was deeply spiritual. Even as a young child, he spoke truths and displayed insights far beyond his years. His devotion to God was strong, and he looked at people of all castes and faiths with an equal eye. That recognition of the universal light equally present in all people remained as he grew to adulthood, became a businessman, and married. After the loss of his young wife, he turned his attention to spiritual practice and studied with many spiritual masters, including Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo.

Finally, in 1949, he met his Guru—H. H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji of the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh. He received *Sannyas Diksha* (initiation into monkhood) from his spiritual master and was given the name Swami Satchidananda. This began a new level of dynamic service for Swami Satchidananda. Soon after his initiation, H. H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji sent Swami Satchidananda to serve in various parts of India and Sri Lanka. This led to Sri Gurudev's service in other countries, and eventually—at the insistence of his American students—to his moving to the United States, as well as to the founding of Satchidananda Ashram—Yogaville,

Virginia and Integral Yoga Institutes and centers around the world.

The distinctive teachings Swami Satchidananda brought to the West blend the physical discipline of Yoga, the spiritual philosophy of Vedantic literature and the interfaith ideals he pioneered. These techniques and concepts influenced a generation and spawned a culture of Yoga that is flourishing today. One of the earliest Yoga teacher training programs was established by the Integral Yoga organization, and Integral Yoga helped to found the Yoga Alliance. Today many Integral Yoga Institutes, teaching centers and certified teachers throughout the United States and abroad offer classes and training programs in all aspects of Integral Yoga. Swami Satchidananda's message emphasized harmony among people of all races and faiths. His motto was: "Truth is One, Paths are Many." He believed deeply in the importance of respecting and honoring diversity, while celebrating our underlying unity as one global family.

In 1979, Swami Satchidananda was inspired to establish Satchidananda Ashram—Yogaville. Based on his teachings, it is a place where people of different faiths and backgrounds can come to realize their essential oneness. A focal point of Yogaville is the Light Of Truth Universal Shrine (LOTUS). This unique interfaith shrine honors the Spirit that unites all the world faiths, while celebrating their diversity. People from all over the world come there to meditate and pray. Swami Satchidananda dedicated his life to the cause of peace—both individual and universal—and to unity and harmony among all people. Not limited to any one organization, religion, or country, he received invitations for over 50 years from around the world to speak about the way to peace.

Swami Satchidananda served on the advisory boards numerous Yoga, interfaith and world peace organizations. During his lifetime, he made eight world tours, 20 European tours,

and logged nearly two million miles of travel around the globe. Swami Satchidananda received many honors for his public service including, the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Award, the Juliet Hollister Award and the U Thant Peace Award. In 1999, the 50th anniversary of his ministerial ordination was commemorated during the interfaith service prior to the opening of the 54th General Assembly of the United Nations. In 2014, on the occasion of his birth centennial, Swami Satchidananda was honored as an interfaith pioneer and visionary for his efforts in promoting world peace through interfaith understanding. He posthumously received the James P. Morton Interfaith Award, which Dr. Dean Ornish received on his behalf, alongside Vice-president Al Gore (who received the award for his climate change advocacy).

The United States in 1978. The following context is derived from the New York Times and the U.S. Census. At the time YS was first published, in 1978, the realities of the political, social, and environmental climate were coming to light in the U.S. as the masses were demanding legislature that would bring about social and environmental justice. Fueled by Watergate, the collapse of the Nixon administration, and the horror of the Vietnam war, much of the general public was politically outraged, no longer held captive by the allure of the American dream. Serial killer Ted Bundy was captured, and the Women's Army Corps (WAC) was abolished, signaling the integration of women into the armed forces. That same year the first women astronauts went to space. The LGBTQIA movement gained public attention as the rainbow flag was erected for the first time in San Francisco, CA. Unsuccessful attempts to silence the LGBTQIA community were enacted later that year when the city's first openly gay elected mayor and City Supervisor, George Moscone and Harvey Milk, were assassinated, uniting the movement.

The rising price of oil further heightened public awareness of environmental issues and

the pitfall of shortsighted capitalism as evidenced by the evacuation of a New York neighborhood due to an environmental pollution disaster effecting the lives of hundreds and requiring a superfund cleanup. In 1978 Jimmy Carter was the president of the United States and both the Senate and House were majority Democrat. The 95th Congress was the first time in U.S. history when either party held a filibuster proof 60 % super-majority. Disenchanted with the status quo, the idealist escapism of the 1960's was giving way to concrete political activism in a population primed to welcome the alternative social values presented in the Yoga Sûtras.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika

This section details the context, development, and background information for the second primary source text. This includes a cultural and historical context for the source as a whole and a description of its development.

Context

The original verses. Hatha Yoga Pradipika emerged during what Feuerstein (2013) referred to as the Post-Classical period of Yoga's history. This era witnessed a philosophical debate over two of the eight limbs of Raja Yoga, specifically, *yama* and *niyama*. Disagreement arose around if, how, and when to include the prescriptive (*yama*) and proscriptive (*niyama*) code of conduct communicated in these first two limbs. Some factions felt the endemic checks of a moral framework was vital to communicate at the outset of practice (Satchidananda, 1978), while others felt that without first purifying the body, a moralistic imposition of restrictions and observances resulted in intrapsychic splitting (Muktibodhananda, 1993).

This rift around the need for an overt moral framework and the role it should play cannot be understood apart from the distinctions between Vedantic and Tantric Yoga over how the body is conceptualized and utilized in practice. Vedanta, or The Vedas, conceptualized the body as

part *maya*, where the senses present obstacles to spiritual evolution in the form of attachment and aversion. A dissenting faction of the tradition conceptualized the body as an expression of divine consciousness. This faction argued that the senses ought to be an integrated part of practice, rather than feeding a cycle of repression and indulgence. This latter conceptualization became a fundamental tenant of Tantric Yoga. The philosophical break between Tantra and Vedanta initiated the exploration of physicality as a gateway to spirituality, leading to the further development of purifying techniques and the expansion of the body-based practices which constitute Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga was disseminated worldwide during the modern era.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika, or Light on Hatha Yoga, is a classic manual on the practices of Hatha Yoga and its benefits. It was written around the start of the 14th century (Feuerstein, 2013) and is the oldest of three seminal texts on Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga does not denounce the prescriptive (*yama*) and proscriptive (*niyama*) code of conduct communicated in the first two limbs. Instead, it describes this code of conduct as the spontaneous result of purifying the bodymind. Hatha Yoga prescribes the practices of *shatkarma*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *bandha*, and *mudra* to ready the bodymind for *dharana*, *dyana*, and *samadhi*. The myriad styles of Yoga in the U.S., such as Anusara, Baptiste, Ashtanga, and Iyengar are essentially variations on traditional Hatha Yoga, where classes mainly include *asana*, *pranayama*, and *dharana*. HYP was the first manualized presentation of Hatha Yoga. The sanskrit verses of HYP are essentially impossible to date, authored by many, communicated orally, and pulled from disparate lectures and literature. While their exact origin remains a mystery, these verses were compiled by Maharishi Svatmarama during the early 14th century (Singh, 2016).

The development of the text. This interpretation of HYP was translated by Swami Satyananda, and further discussed by his student Swami Muktibodhananda. In other words,

Swami Satyananda converted the Sanskrit verses to English and Swami Muktibodhananda provided a thorough commentary on each verse. The first edition was published in 1985, the second in 1993, and it was reprinted with corrections in 1998. The Bihar School of Yoga, founded by Swami Satyananda, published and printed these first three versions of the text. Later, the Yoga Publications Trust was developed as the sole curator of all literature written by Swami Satyananda and the lineage of teachers he initiated. The Yoga Publications Trust oversaw six further printings of this text. The Yoga Publications Trust gave permission for the creation of a digital version of HYP, published online in 2016.

Swami Satyananda. Swami Satyananda was born in Almora, Uttar Pradesh, in 1923. In his youth he studied Sanskrit, The Vedas, and The Upanishads. In one of his early publications, *Yoga from Shore to Shore*, he reported spiritual experiences beginning at the age of six, when his awareness spontaneously left the body. This experience led his parents to seek the guidance of saints of that time such as Anandamayi Ma, and Sukhaman Giri, who directed them to encourage Satyananda to find a *guru*. At 18, he left home to find his *guru*, and at 21 and took vows after meeting Swami Sivananda Saraswati in Rishikesh. In 1955 he left the ashram, and lived as a wandering mendicant until 1956 when he founded the International Yoga Fellowship and later the Bihar School of Yoga in 1963. Between 1963 and 1983, Satyananda toured internationally and authored over 80 books. In 1984 he founded the Sivananda Math (a charity aiding rural communities) and the Yoga Research Foundation. In 1988 he renounced all worldly adulation, and lived as a *paramahansa sannyasin*, performing austerities and *sadhanas* until his death in 2009.

Swami Muktibodhananda. Swami Muktibodhananda was born Gabrielle Grace, in Melbourne, Australia. She began studying Yoga at the age of 12 and at 17, she left Australia to

spend 10 years serving her *guru*, Swami Satyananda. In 1977 she took vows as a *sannyasa*, becoming Swami Muktibodhananda Saraswati and dedicating her life to the teaching and practice of Yoga. She was given the title Yogacharya (Yoga authority) from Paramahansa Swami Niranjanananda in 1993. Muktibodhananda sought to distil the yogic knowledge and experiences she had gained into three seminal texts: *Swara Yoga: The Tantric Science of Brain Breathing*, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika: Light on Hatha Yoga*, and *Energy: The Spark of Life & Universal Goddess*. She continues to teach and hold retreats internationally to this day.

The United States in 1985. The following was drawn from the New York Times and U.S. Census data. During the year HYP was published, the U.S. bore witness to the continuation of a conservative backlash against the politically progressive era that precipitated Reagan's first term. In 1985, after four years of losing political ground, where economic interests again took priority over public interest, Reagan was privately sworn in for a second term. Later that year he collaborated with West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, having met at a cemetery known for its burial of 59 elite SS troops; CIA mercenaries attempted to kill Islamic cleric Sayyed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah with a car bomb that resulted in 80 civilians dead and 200 civilians injured; and, Philadelphia police stormed the headquarters of the Black liberation group MOVE with an explosive device that killed eleven members and destroyed 61 homes in a community that promoted environmental sustainability, nonviolence, social justice, and grassroots democracy. The cultural climate in 1985 saw a resurgence of right-wing extremists like David Lewis Rice who murdered civil rights attorney Charles Goldmark, his wife, and two children for his Jewish identity and Socialist politics.

Public optimism around sustained social change and support for political participation had become deflated, undermining the moral conviction and clarity of the Carter era. During a

period of political confusion and apathy public attention was easily captured by the technological advances that occurred in 1985. The first Personal Computer (PC) was launched at Lincoln Center, New York, NY granting widespread access to technology that was previously operated only by experts. Later that year, the Nintendo Entertainment System was released, kicking off a wave of cyber escapism that continues to pacify and distract the masses today.

Similarly, the need for distraction was reflected in an explosion in the entertainment industry. The comic strip *Calvin and Hobbes* was first printed in 35 newspapers nation-wide and *Back to the Future* opened in American theatres, advancing a genre of science fiction that transported the viewer to an illusory realm of surreal social realities. Racial equality was taking a political hit under the Reagan administration, and once again the African American voice was confined to the field of entertainment. Singer Whitney Houston released her debut album, boxer Mike Tyson won his first match in a record breaking first-round knockout, and musician Michael Jackson's album *Thriller* had just won nine Academy Awards, later becoming the best-selling album in U.S. history.

The moral framework of YS may not have been received as positively as the moral ambiguity of HYP, as the climate undoubtedly influenced the way this text was read and understood. Thus, HYP was first interpreted by people living in a hyper-individualistic, myopic, and escapist world focused heavily on entertainment, technological advancement, and personal gain.

Exemplar Articles

In this section I present the ten exemplar articles. I begin by giving cultural and historical context for the exemplars as a whole, a description of each article, and a brief discussion of the professional practices and affiliations shared by the authors of all ten exemplars.

Context

The U.S. in 2015 and 2016. This section was developed using data from the Washington Post and the U.S. census. All exemplars were published between 2015 and 2016, years that marked by the end of the Obama administration and an election season that strengthened the influence of neoliberalism in U.S. socio-political practices and institutions. Sugarman (2015) described the essential elements of neoliberalism as:

... a radically free market in which competition is maximized, free trade achieved through economic deregulation, privatization of public assets, vastly diminished state responsibility over areas of social welfare, the corporatization of human services, and monetary and social policies congenial to corporations and disregardful of the consequences: poverty, rapid depletion of resources, irreparable damage to the biosphere, destruction of cultures, and erosion of liberal democratic institutions. (p. 3)

According to a federal analysis reported by the Pew Research Center, in 2015, the majority of Americans fell below the middle-income threshold, marking an increasing gap between rich and poor. According to data issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, deaths due to gun violence became as common as those resulting from car accidents in 2015. The statistics reported at the end of the year approximated 34,000 deaths in 2015 as the result of gun violence, which amounts to 93 people each day.

A drastic shift in immigration occurred in 2015, where more immigrants from Mexico left the U.S. than arrived. The few acts by Islamic terrorists commanded media attention, despite the number of deaths being far fewer than those caused by right-wing terrorists such as white supremacists who remain in relative obscurity. While the U.S. resisted accepting refugees, over

one million such migrants entered Europe via the Mediterranean Sea. The International Organization for Migration reported that more than half of these migrants had left Syria, while approximately 14% left Afghanistan. The miniscule increase in the federal interest rate was determined to signify the U.S. economy had stabilized seven years after the stock market crash of 2008. In 2015, the millennials surpassed the baby boomer generation as the largest in U.S. history. Lastly, a historic five to four supreme court decision in June of 2015 ruled that bans on same-sex marriage are unconstitutional, legalizing same-sex marriage across all 50 states (Washington Post, 2018).

In 2016, there was a severe backlash against the few political gains of 2015. For example, Alabama Supreme Court Roy Moore was suspended until the end of his term for directing probate judges to enforce the state's unconstitutional ban on same-sex marriage. Similarly, a policy seeking to extend the Affordable Care Act to include anti-discrimination protections for transgender health and abortion-related services was blocked by a federal judge in Texas.

The U.S. was struck by the death of both Prince and David Bowie, musicians that influenced generations of American listeners. The U.S. sustained involvement in the ongoing Syrian conflict, and despite continued efforts the Islamic State retained their foothold in the Middle East. Legislature loosening the restriction of gun sales was passed, despite the increase of school shootings and mass shootings like the incident in Orlando where 49 people were killed. Five police officers were killed and eleven people were injured when a sniper opened fire on a peaceful Black Lives Matter protest in Dallas, TX. Floods and wildfires rage across the continental U.S. while climate change is largely omitted in news reports from mass media outlets. Presidential candidate Donald Trump faced multiple accusations of sexual assault and

harassment, for which he has yet to stand trial at the time of this writing. The *Washington Post* released a 2005 videotape of Trump boasting about evading prosecution for sexual assault, for which he later issued an online apology. An FBI investigation was opened into then presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server which was later closed without charges. Predicted by news outlets and political experts as unlikely, the nation was shocked when Donald Trump became the oldest man with no prior political or military experience to be elected U.S. president via the Electoral College, despite a deficit of three million votes. Intelligence agencies concluded that the Kremlin orchestrated Democratic National Committee (DNC) cyber-attacks to assist Donald Trump in winning the election and a full-scale investigation was opened. More than 300 people were injured, 26 of whom had to be hospitalized, after police used water cannons, tear gas, rubber bullets, and concussion grenades at a peaceful protest against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

In looking back to Sugarman's (2015) quote, the prominent moments over the course of these two years can be understood as the expanding influence of neoliberalism as seen in the socio-political practices and institutions of the U.S. This is in no way meant to be a comprehensive list, and are only a few of the notable events of 2015 and 2016 in order to provide context for the cultural and sociopolitical climate in which the exemplar articles were published.

Selection criteria. As these articles were intended to serve as exemplars of the *current* discourse on Yoga in Psychology, an effort was made to select the ten most recently published and frequently cited articles. Additionally, because the aim was to capture how psychologists in the United States understand and talk about Yoga, care was taken to ensure the main author of each article was a psychologist indoctrinated in the U.S. and a U.S. resident while the article written and at the time of its publication. Furthermore, priority was given to articles where

research was sponsored, hosted, and conducted within the U.S.

The authors. While it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss each of these authors in depth, what follows is a brief consideration of their shared characteristics and what these reveal about the lens through which Yoga is being interpreted, understood, and discussed. It is notable that the principle ideologies of neoliberalism such as individualism, instrumentalism, capitalism, intellectual imperialism, paternalism, and scientific proceduralism are fundamentally embedded in the authors' research interests, methods of inquiry, and preferred procedural intervention strategies. For example, Genovese, Fondran, Pradhan, Parikh, Bose, Keswani, Lyons, & Vieten hold secondary degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics, otherwise known as the STEM disciplines. These disciplines are upheld by the doctrine of objectivity and evaluate and describe both human beings and the natural world in a detached, calculating, and instrumental manner. Additionally, the prescriptive and proscriptive influence of neoliberalism to demarcate the sociopolitical arrangements of life in the U.S. has resulted in increased funding for educational institutions that prioritize STEM disciplines to the detriment of the arts and humanities (Sugarman, 2015; & Cushman, 2013a & 2014). This indicates that these authors might evaluate Yoga reductively and instrumentally, disregarding elements that might interfere with efficient implementation, and highlighting aspects that demonstrate therapeutic value while being economically viable.

In reviewing online biographical statements and the curriculum vitae for each author, it is clear that Genovese, Fondran, Riley, Park, Jastrowski-Mano, Alexander, Hopkins, Medina, Powers, Smits, Pradhan, Gray, Parikh, Akkireddi, Frank, Kohler, Peal, Bose, Gibler, Goethe, Keswani, Shapiro, Lyons, Miller, Vieten, and Zelazo demonstrate a clear preference for quantitative methods of inquiry in their previous research and manualized intervention strategies

such as Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). The overt and intentional selection of manualized Yoga practices and instructors who exemplify this procedural approach mirrors this preferred methodology and intervention strategy. The scientific proceduralism used to privilege manualized interventions does not ensure best treatment, but appears to do so because of how perfectly it reflects and reproduces the cultural clearing of the neoliberal U.S. (Goodman, 2016; Sugarman, 2015). While the problematic nature of this cyclic relationship is discussed later in this chapter, these shared values and interests of the authors are prone to perpetuating intellectual imperialism by selectively appropriating practices that can be easily manualized while ignoring the multifaceted tradition and phenomenological aim of Yoga. A more in-depth discussion with examples of the way these interests, methods, and intervention models both reflect and reproduce neoliberalism in the U.S. exists later in this chapter. What follows is a brief introduction to each exemplar and mention of shared characteristics.

The development of the texts. In this section I briefly describe each exemplar and comment on some of their shared traits. Articles were ranked by impact factor, and are presented in order from the most to the least cited.

Genovese, J. E.C., & Fondran, K. M. (2016). Depression and anxiety decline after participation in a semester long Yoga class. *Psychology and Education, An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 53(3-4), 52–54.

This research was sponsored by, hosted by, and conducted at Cleveland State University (CSU), a large institution of higher education in Ohio. Spanning only three pages in length, the article was simple, direct, and easy to read with minimal jargon. The authors reported on a study where they administered a 21 item self-report measure called the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress

Scale (DASS 21) to a group of college students prior to and following a semester-long Yoga class that met twice per week. While they reported a clinically significant decrease in depression and anxiety, many elements of their study did not meet the standards of their intended research design. These limitations included the absence of an adequate control group, a minimally diverse sample comprised of young, middle class, Caucasian females, and incomplete or unsubmitted feedback with regard to the follow up measure given.

Riley, K. E., & Park, C. L. (2015). How does Yoga reduce stress? A systemic review of mechanisms of change and guide for future inquiry. *Health Psychology Review, 9*(3), 379–396.

The research and writing for the subsequent report was sponsored by, hosted by, and conducted at the department of Psychology at the University of Connecticut (UConn). This study was a meta-analysis that aimed to articulate and compare the mechanism of change identified in five studies that evaluated the efficacy of Yoga to reduce stress. They identified three psychological mechanisms (positive affect, mindfulness, and self-compassion) and four biological mechanisms (posterior hypothalamus, interleukin-6, c-reactive protein, and cortisol) discussed by all five articles. The authors found that positive affect, self-compassion, inhibition of the posterior hypothalamus, and salivary cortisol all appeared to mediate the relationship between Yoga and stress. Furthermore, they critiqued the currently available research and suggested more rigorous methodology, sufficient power, randomization, and appropriate control groups.

Quach, D., Mano, K. E. J., & Alexander, K. (2016). A randomized controlled trial examining the effect of mindfulness meditation on working memory capacity in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 58*(5), 489–496.

This study was sponsored by both the California School of Professional Psychology, Alliant International University in San Diego, CA and the Department of Psychology, University of Cincinnati, Ohio. The research was conducted at a large public high school in Southern California. This article reported on a study that attempted to use a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) to evaluate the effect of mindfulness meditation and Hatha Yoga on working memory. Researchers recruited 198 participants that were randomly assigned to meditation, Yoga, and a waitlist control group. Both the meditation and Yoga groups received instruction and had opportunities to practice twice per week for four weeks. Participants completed a computerized measure of working memory and a self-report measure of perceived stress and anxiety pre- and post-intervention. This study revealed that a four-week period of instruction and practice of meditation resulted in significant improvements in working memory. No significant benefits to working memory were demonstrated in the control group or the Yoga group, and none of the groups reported a significant reduction in stress or anxiety.

Hopkins, L. B., Medina, J. L., Baird, S. O., Rosenfeld, D., Powers, M. B., & Smits, J. A. J. (2016). Heated hatha yoga to target cortisol reactivity to stress and affective eating in women at risk for obesity-related illnesses: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology, 84(6), 558–564.*

The research for this study and those writing the subsequent report were sponsored by the Southern Methodist University in Texas. It is unclear how participants were recruited, or where the research was conducted. The article describes a study that used heated Hatha Yoga to reduce cortisol and treat emotional eating in women with obesity. Researchers recruited 52 females who were randomly assigned to an eight-week Bikram Yoga class or a waitlist control group. Cortisol levels were measured pre- and post-treatment and self-reported binge eating and coping

motives were assessed at the outset, midway through, and at the end of treatment. Results indicated that Yoga has the capacity to decrease cortisol levels for individuals with elevated cortisol, and those who participated in Yoga reported reduced episodes of binge eating and a greater capacity to cope with negative affect without eating. Limitations for this study include the use of only a waitlist control group for comparison. Additionally, despite “careful randomization” (p. 563), the authors admitted those assigned to the Yoga group ended up being younger and less restrained in their eating, which may have skewed the outcome.

Pradhan, B., Gray, R., Parikh, T., Akkireddi, P., & Pumariega, A. (2015). Trauma interventions using mindfulness based extinction and reconsolidation (TIMBER) as monotherapy for chronic PTSD: A pilot study. *Adolescent Psychiatry, 5(2), 125–131.*

The research for this article was hosted by Cooper University Hospital and Cooper Medical School of Rowan University in Camden, New Jersey, as well as Fairleigh Dickenson University, also located in New Jersey. To protect the privacy of participants in a study that was conducted primarily in the context of individual therapy, the location where the study was conducted has been omitted. The study aimed to achieve three primary goals: (a) A critical evaluation of prolonged exposure therapy (PE) in the treatment of trauma, (b) Psychoeducation about a newly developed intervention strategy for treating trauma called Trauma Interventions using Mindfulness Based Extinction and Reconsolidation (TIMBER), and (c) The preliminary results of treating four adolescent patients using TIMBER. The authors assert that PE is highly limited with regard to tolerability and efficacy. Their theoretical rationale for the efficacy of TIMBER is comprised of piecemeal concepts and processes credited to neuropsychology and trauma theory. However, within the article there are uncited statements about affective extinction and memory reconsolidation. The results section described the treatment of four

adolescents using TIMBER. Using self-report measures pre- and post-intervention, the authors asserted that TIMBER produced a clinically significant reduction of PTSD symptoms, and that an eight month follow up with participants indicated that this improvement had been maintained.

Frank, J. L., Kohler, K., Peal, A., & Bose, B. (2016). Effectiveness of a school-based Yoga program on adolescent mental health and school performance: Findings from a randomized controlled trial. *Mindfulness*, 8(3), 544–553.

The research for this article was sponsored by the department of educational psychology, counseling, and special education at Pennsylvania State University (PSU) and the Niroga Institute, a non-profit based in Oakland, CA. Research was conducted at a culturally diverse inner-city middle school in an impoverished, urban area in California. The article described an RCT designed to assess the efficacy of a Yoga-based social-emotional wellness promotion program called Transformative Life Skills (TLS). A sample of 159 students were randomly assigned to either a treatment group or a control group. Results suggested that students who participated in the TLS program had fewer unexcused absences, detentions, and increased school engagement. Specifically, improvement in emotion regulation, positive thinking, and cognitive restructuring in response to stress were observed. The study relied primarily on self-report measures and the authors suggested future research to include parent and teacher reports.

Quach, D., Gibler, R. C., & Mano, K. J. (2016). Does home practice compliance make a difference in the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions for adolescents? *Mindfulness*, 8(2), 495–504.

This article reported on a separate analysis of different features of research data shared with an article listed above (Quach, Mano, & Alexander, 2016). It was sponsored by the department of counseling and psychological services at San Jose State University, CA and the

Department of Psychology, University of Cincinnati (UC), OH. The research was conducted at a large public high school in Southern California. This article focused on an incidental finding from the aforementioned study that evaluated the effect of mindfulness meditation and Hatha Yoga on working memory. Students assigned to the meditation group demonstrated greater compliance to the at-home practice element of their intervention than students in the Yoga or waitlist control group. This article sought to determine how much this unpredicted factor contributed to the outcomes of the previous study, or specifically how influential their at-home practice was on the efficacy of the mindfulness intervention. Results indicated a significant correlation between at-home practice and decreases in perceived stress.

Goethe, N. P., Keswani, R. K., & McAuley, E. (2016). Yoga practice improves executive function by attenuating stress levels. *Biological Psychology, 121*(Part A), 109–116.

This research was sponsored by the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and conducted at a local Yoga studio and fitness center at the UIUC campus. The study aimed to demonstrate a link between Yoga, stress reduction, and improved executive functioning. The introduction included an extensive literature review of neuroscientific research findings linking stress with executive dysfunction. The biological mechanisms and processes that are involved in the body's stress response were identified. Specifically, the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal system (HPA axis) was discussed and targeted in this study. The aim was to assess whether Yoga could positively affect the HPA axis, and to do this, 118 participants were randomly assigned to either a Yoga intervention group or a stretching and strengthening control group. Each group participated in an eight-week program with three meetings each week. Cognitive functioning, executive functioning, stress, and anxiety were all assessed pre- and post-intervention using both self-report and objective measures. This article demonstrated ideal

fidelity with the intended research design and methodology selected, and those participants in the Yoga group demonstrated a clinically significant improvement in performance on executive functioning measures and an attenuated cortisol response when compared with their control group counterparts.

Shapiro, S. L., Lyons, K. E., Miller, R. C., Butler, B., Vieten, C., & Zelazo, P. D. (2015).

Contemplation in the classroom: A new direction for improving childhood education. *Educational Psychology Review*, 27(1), 1–30.

This article reported on the findings from a literature review was sponsored by Santa Clara University, CA, the Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, MN, the Integrative Restoration Institute in San Rafael, CA, and the Institute of Noetic Sciences and California Pacific Medical Center Research Institute in San Francisco, CA. This literature review evaluated the empirical evidence supporting the introduction of contemplative practices into childhood education. In summarizing their findings, the authors discussed evidence supporting the impact of contemplative practices including Yoga, on executive function, emotion regulation, perspective taking, self-compassion, moral development, creativity, and learning. They also made extensive suggestions for future research.

Medina, J., Hopkins, L., Powers, M., Baird, S. O., & Smits, J. (2015). The effects of hatha

Yoga on facets of distress tolerance. *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*. 44(4), 288–300.

This study and subsequent report is based on a separate analysis of unforeseen findings from an earlier study mentioned above (Hopkins et al., 2016). It was sponsored by the university of Texas and the VA Medical Center in San Francisco. This article reinforced the findings of a previous study that aimed to use heated Hatha Yoga to reduce cortisol and treat emotional eating in women with obesity. In this earlier study, participants in the Yoga group reported increased

distress tolerance and decreased emotional eating. This study mainly discussed that correlation in more depth and re-affirmed that findings of the study were consistent with the hypothesis at the outset.

Summary of Exemplar Articles

Each of these articles were authored by individuals directly employed by, or with strong affiliation to, institutions of higher education. Research was predominantly funded and hosted by these institutions, and the studies themselves employed quantitative methods of analysis and evaluated the efficacy of manualized and often trademarked Yoga practices. These choices cannot be understood outside the economic infrastructure surrounding academia, where quantitative research receives more funding and is more likely to be eligible for grant money than qualitative research. Western scientific research, especially quantitative research, is inherently reductive and the ability replicate findings reinforces the value placed on manualized interventions.

All exemplars sought to understand Yoga by evaluating its instrumental value, or more specifically, how Yoga could be a tool for the therapeutic gain of individuals and the economic gain of therapists. None of these articles referenced the theory, philosophy, or any other facet of the Yoga tradition in a meaningful or accurate way, none cited Yogic literature in their literature reviews, and none recognized Yoga as having its own system of psychology. None of these articles questioned whether Western research methods could produce meaningful interpretations of yoga, nor did they discuss other approaches to inquiry more consistent with Yogic science as a direction for future research. Based on the cultural historical context of the authors and the research itself, it is not surprising that the previously mentioned ideologies embedded in neoliberalism such as individualism, instrumentalism, capitalism, intellectual imperialism,

paternalism, and scientific proceduralism are inextricable from the research design, method, selected interventions, and interpretations drawn. It is also noteworthy that each of the exemplars from this timeframe were focused primarily on Yoga interventions in children and adolescents as a means to reduce stress and anxiety, and to improve cognitive functioning or academic performance. This provides an example of the embedded nature of the neoliberal agenda within the U.S. From a young age, children are indoctrinated into the cultural and socio-political ideals set forth by the neoliberal agenda, such that if they fail to perform at an optimal level relative to academics or mental health, they require treatment to correct these concerns. This is likely done in an effort to promote functionality within these individuals as they age, thus perpetuating the neoliberal standard for a healthy, successful workforce in the U.S.

CHAPTER VI: HERMENEUTIC INQUIRY FOREGROUNDING

Foregrounding the Assumptions of Philosophic Hermeneutics

Gadamer (1975) described foregrounding as the process of attending to and articulating the moral and ontological assumptions of the interpreter. This means recognizing the power of these pre-conceptions, how I have embodied them, how I give them lived authority. The foregrounded assumptions are limited to those that we consciously recognize, and those previously invisible assumptions that become clear during dialogue with and interpretation of the text (Gadamer, 1975). Gadamer argued that the ability to listen generously requires discernment between the understandings being presented in the text as they make contact with the existing understandings of the interpreter.

Making central the culturally-bound and temporally-embedded nature of this study increases the significance of the interpretations. Gadamer (1975) argued that the embedded nature of inquiry is a hindrance only when it is dissociated. When left unarticulated and uncritiqued, the voices of our tradition exert an unconscious influence and deafen us to the message of the other (Gadamer, 1975). Thus, to maintain fidelity with the principles of philosophic hermeneutics, I make explicit the assumptions that are relevant for this study.

- (a) Hermeneutic textual analysis is both the experience of being in dialogue with the text and the act of interpretation.
- (b) Gadamerian dialogue is not method and is constitutive rather than instrumental.
- (c) Being is linguistic and language is constitutive of lived experience and understanding.
- (d) The text is viewed as an exemplar of human life, read like cultural/historical discourse that is alive via practice. Thus, understanding a text's meaning asks us to understand the world the people and world that produced it.

- (e) The interpreter embodies understandings already present in world where she exists, giving lived authority to the historical traditions and the social meanings contained in her vernacular. An attempt to foreground these understandings is requisite to genuine dialogue and meaningful interpretation.
- (f) The prejudices and fore-meanings that constitute the interpreter's consciousness cannot be removed, and one cannot discern in advance the productive prejudices that enable understanding from those that hinder it and lead to misunderstanding.
- (g) Theories and practices that appear true and known in one context can appear untrue or unknown in another. Thus, all understanding must be interpreted contextually.
- (h) All traditions are indigenous, blind to what lies beyond the horizon of their cultural and historical understandings, and thus unfinished or in a perpetual process of refinement.
- (i) The understanding generated via dialogue and interpretation does not result in methodological sureness, but rather elevates the value of humility, supports receptivity to learning, and recognizes the finitude of knowledge and reason.
- (j) Genuine dialogue with text is a political act, where we allow our pre-conceptions to fall prey to doubt and revision, embrace the discomfort of ambiguity, and surrender the security of ideological superiority.
- (k) Moral relativism is dangerous and leaves us nowhere to stand. Dialogue does not require we sanction theories or practices we find untenable. The influence of the other can confirm our beliefs and commitments.
- (l) Dialogue is always and already embodied. The in-the-body experience of dialogue marks the space between simplistic judgment and understanding.
- (m) Dialogue sets endemic checks on the disruptive forces of colonization and sublimation

by resisting the tendency to view the other in instrumental terms, dissociating or appropriating the meanings presented in the text to bolster the tradition of the interpreter.

- (n) Interpretation upholds the dialectic between the interpreter and the text through a moving back and forth between the text as understood relative to the interpreter's context, and the text as understood relative to its original context. Ideally this culminates in a *fusion of horizons* where both a common language has been achieved and we have been, "transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were" (Gadamer, 1975).
- (o) The result of interpretation is not simply cognitive shift, but a re-visioning of our lived understanding, better understood as an embodied historical event.

Foregrounding the Interpreter's Relevant Experience

When conducting hermeneutic research, it is important to begin by reflecting and articulating the understandings that shape the interpreter's very being. Heidegger argued that humans are born into a context of shared understandings and practices informed by a tradition of interpretation (Ludlam, 2007). Mainstream scientific research assumes that it is possible for a researcher to separate from this historical or cultural context and take a neutral approach to inquiry. Conversely, hermeneutic interpretation is dependent on these foundational values and understandings, without which we could not make sense of the new ideas we encounter. Recognizing our moral convictions and ontological assumptions makes possible an evaluation of our own tradition's theories and practices (Richardson et al., 1999). Heidegger explained that we come to the act of interpretation while standing on the back of tradition, that we bring to the act of interpretation our invisible pre-understandings, and that this informs our approach to inquiry, the methods employed, and the conclusions drawn (Ludlam, 2007). Thus, while I am steeped in

philosophical hermeneutics, I was raised and indoctrinated in a culture that deifies the Western scientific method and presents the theories and practices of psychology in the U.S. as universal truth. Furthermore, I have spent over 18 years immersed in the rigorous study and practice of Yoga both in the U.S. and in India. What follows is an attempt to make explicit prejudices that undoubtedly influence the interpretations I make in this study.

While this section is an attempt to foreground my prejudice, I am aware that I am unconsciously affected by the cultural and historical discourse that I embody. The inquiry itself increased my awareness of my horizon and that of the text in such a way that Yoga and U.S. psychology emerged in a new light. The foregrounding statements were written prior to interpretation of the source texts and exemplar articles. Here, I begin by describing my lived experience in relation to Yoga, as this is more apparent than the taken for granted traditions I have unconsciously participated in throughout my life.

Lived Experience: Yoga

For as long as I can remember I have been drawn to altered or ecstatic states. I remember loving to spin incessantly, plop down, and watch the world whirr past my gaze. My earliest spiritual experiences came through dance. I would lose myself in music, my mind quieting, my body falling into alignment with rhythm and sound. Practices and teachings about mystical and subtle experiences held intense allure. While my parents claimed no religious affiliation and engaged in no formal spiritual practices, books like *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, *The Tao of Physics*, and *Siddhartha* littered our book shelves. While my extended family was strictly Christian and Catholic, my parents encouraged my desire to explore various religious traditions. My extended family was distraught by my interfaith study and sent me to Christian summer camp with the aim of conversion. Not wanting to deprive me of attending an overnight

summer camp, my parents did not protest. Having enjoyed the feeling of communal involvement during that first summer at camp, I became curious, bought a Bible, took it home, and read it cover to cover. I was eleven at the time.

Mistaking my desire for dialogue as religious fervor, my grandparents happily encouraged me to return the following summer. I wanted answers to difficult questions about the apparent contradictions within the text itself and between the text and the politics of many Christians. I was struggling to rectify the pacifism of Jesus and the military involvement of Christian politicians. I felt affiliated with a sense of stewardship, and rejected the idea that man has dominion over the earth. I saw this idea as being directly tied to unsustainable economic and environmental practices. I did not understand the dichotomies, and wondered how Christians could eat meat, but oppose abortion, or why human life was valued over animal life. I could never grasp the condemnation of homosexuality, nor the call to honor one's father and mother when faced with the pervasive physical and sexual abuse of children. My attempts to dialogue did not go over well with campers, counselors, or staff members.

I was surprised to be invited back for a third summer. At 13, I had learned not only from the teachings of Christ, I had developed reverence for the Buddha, and a number of other authors, poets, and mystics such as Lao Tzu, Rumi, and Hafiz. These teachers all demonstrated ways of being in the world that I saw as worthy of deep consideration. The Bible contains beautiful poetry and wisdom, but I wanted to put it into conversation with other traditions, not elevate it dogmatically. The intense conversations I had the previous year had piqued my curiosity and I returned to camp with a text on Pagan lore, the Tao Te Ching, and the Bhagavad Gita. I wanted to articulate the connections I saw between religious traditions and find common ground between the tradition of my family and those other traditions which had spoken to me. I

wanted to understand how moral understanding converged and diverged across culture and time. Needless to say, I was not sent to camp again and this marked the end of my family's attempts at conversion.

The resistance I encountered at camp and with my extended family only fueled my desire to understand. I gobbled up spiritual texts from all over the world. I read the Torah, parts of The Qu'ran, The Upanishads, the Vijnanabairavana Tantra, the Spanda Karika's, the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and all the poetry I could get my hands on. Language and the power of words to create meaning, to unite and separate, fascinated me. In my first year of undergraduate study, I discovered chanting. I started with Buddhist prayers, and developed a strong interest in Sanskrit. I began chanting the Yoga Sûtras, then the Bhagavad Gita, and then the Sri Lalita Sahasranama. I did not fully understand all of what I was chanting, but I worked hard to accurately pronounce the verses and found myself absorbed in their resonance. I began to trust my embodied experience of these sounds, and the transformative affect they had on my mental and physical wellbeing. It was as if the instrument of my being had been tuned after each recitation. With ongoing practice, chanting resulted in periods of spontaneous meditation.

In the U.S., with our obsession with youth and physical beauty, Yoga is advertised as an aerobic exercise that results in both. It is more common for individuals to be first exposed to asana practice (or the practice of physical postures) before encountering any other aspect of Yogic tradition. Conversely, my encounter with Yoga was culturally atypical, as I began by reading scripture, chanting, and practicing concentration long before discovering the physical postures. When I began to practice asana, the Yogic philosophy I had read and contemplated imbued my practice with purpose and meaning. While taking a year off during my undergraduate studies, I immersed myself in spiritual literature and practice. I became fascinated

with the *guru*-disciple relationship, as the need for guidance for spiritual progress is emphasized in most of the literature on Yoga. I had heard about an Indian *guru* that promoted the spiritual value of unconditional love and selfless service through a close friend and went to hear her speak. Deeply inspired, I asked to receive a mantra to become a devotee. My academic interests were affected by my spiritual experiences, and upon returning to school I shifted the focus of my degree plan. I designed my own curriculum in contemplative education, evaluating the impact of contemplative practices on cognition, creativity, and learning. I studied the history of education in the West and its origins in the monastic tradition of early Europe. I studied and applied *Lectio Divina*, the monastic practice of contemplating text, and wrote a four-month contract to live and work at an ashram in Kerala, India studying service as a way of knowing under the tutelage of my *guru*.

Upon graduation, I had been steadily practicing asanas, *pranayama*, mantra *japa* (internal repetition of a prayer given by the *guru*), chanting the 108 and 1,000 names of the Divine Mother, and using my *guru*'s specific concentration practice for three years on a daily basis. My life had already become revolved around my *sadhana* (spiritual practice) and I wanted my career to be equally one-pointed. I enrolled in a rigorous teacher-training program through the Samadhi Yoga Center in Seattle, Washington. I was drawn to this particular studio as it was the first established Yoga studio in Seattle, and had a reputation for honoring the philosophical, historical, and cultural context of Yoga. I knew this training would include an inquiry into all eight limbs of Yoga, not simply the postures. I enrolled in the program and began to live, breathe, eat, drink, and sleep Yoga. When I completed my training, I knew I wanted to combine Yoga and service work. I did not want to teach Yoga to predominantly upper-middleclass White women, but I had to begin somewhere. In teaching at Yoga studios, I was disappointed to find

that students were drawn to Yoga for primarily to gain flexibility and lose weight. Rarely were my students interested in the philosophy or the ethics of the tradition, and they were often resistant to concepts that questioned the security, comfort, or privileges associated with their socioeconomic status. This further kindled my desire to teach Yoga to underprivileged populations, to grant them access to the teachings and practices that had so powerfully transformed my life. Eventually, I got a job as a forensic mental health clinician where I served a population of homeless individuals with chronic and severe mental illness who had been involved with the legal system. In teaching Yoga to this population, I found that cultural, economic, and systemic barriers were most often at the root of clients' psychological suffering. My patients would leave the office and face violence, limited economic opportunity, and widespread judgment, rejection, and disgust. Inadequate funding for social services resulted in little to no availability of basic necessities and resources, and as a result, clients resorted in desperation to the overuse of illicit substances, self-harm, or illegal behavior to obtain a bed and a warm meal in a hospital or jail cell. I felt uncomfortable teaching this population how to better tolerate their experiences, and thus their circumstances.

Teaching Yoga in this context felt pacifying and politically unethical. I felt underequipped and confused about how to teach Yoga without reinforcing the status quo. This internal conflict prompted my enrollment in a graduate program in psychology. A few years after beginning my doctoral degree, I discovered pervasive corruption and inexcusable abuses of power within this spiritual community. This was a devastating experience for me. My life and identity had become so enmeshed in the community that it was difficult to imagine myself apart from it. Among other acts of service, I was co-facilitating and organizing two volunteer projects to feed homeless teens and adults, I attended weekly *satsanga* for three

hours, and I collaborated with all the devotees in the Northwest to host our *guru*'s yearly visit to Seattle. I had developed strong friendships within the community, so I decided to reach out for support. When I asked fellow devotees about how they were wrestling with the reports of physical and sexual abuse, gender inequality, and misappropriation of donations, my questions were met with heavy resistance. Claims were denied and the increasing number of people coming to the fore to report similar experiences were dismissed as mentally unstable individuals caught in the allure of a scandal. These individuals were pathologized, described as seeking retribution of perceived slights, and ultimately ostracized. My personal knowledge of a few of those coming out conflicted with these characterizations. Additionally, my understanding of the courage it took to come forward and personal loss that ensued made obvious that these characterizations were emblematic of occult denial.

The devotees in my community urged me not to get mired in negative thinking and warned me of the danger of doubting the *guru*. They excused reports of abuse saying that a devotee cannot conceive of the motivations of the guru. If abuse happened, it was likely our guru was helping her devotees burn off previously accumulated karma. My concerns were sometimes met with paternalistic sympathy, as they viewed my internal conflict as simply difficulty surrendering my ego. I was lectured about the necessity of complete subjugation of personal will to the *guru* in order to receive divine grace. My concerns about this permissive and dangerous logic, and the potential outcome of taking this logic to its conceivable end, were ignored.

It became clear to me that I had become unknowingly involved in a cult. I was suddenly aware that the fervent devotion and resulting ecstatic states had made me vulnerable to manipulation. Many of the devotees in the community had donated large sums of money, pieces

of property, giving years of their life and often raising their children to believe unquestionably in the power of the *guru* and the purity of the tradition. Facing the guilt, remorse, and personal loss associated with questioning their teacher or leaving their tradition was intolerable. Instead, my questioning was rejected as a lack of faith and devotion, weakness of will, inability to surrender, or an indication of my own mental instability. My willingness to consider the claims of so many was responded to with rhetoric about the good the organization was doing for the needy worldwide. Knowing I could not participate in a community that was unwilling to dialogue when faced with internal corruption, I cut ties, stopped attending weekly and monthly Satsang, and informed my co-facilitators that I would no longer participate in or organize the volunteer projects.

While separating myself from the community was relatively quick, my reflection on how I became involved in a cult has been a long and complex journey. I have become highly suspicious where previously I had accepted the Yoga tradition as universal truth. Suddenly theories and practices that I had relied on for a sense of strength and connection had become associated with behavior I found reprehensible. This forced me to question, critique, and engage more dynamically with the tradition of Yoga. Since that time, my belief in the theoretical validity and my intimate experience of Yoga has taken on myriad expressions.

Lived Experience: Psychology

Following their marriage, my parents decided to move to Costa Rica where they resided for three years. My father worked as an agricultural engineer, and developed a solar powered system to dry corn efficiently and affordably. My mother studied at the University of Costa Rica's conservatory of music. In addition, when later pursuing her degree in geography, she used her experience living in Costa Rica to fuel an inquiry into the correlation between

deforestation and U.S. agricultural interests. After returning to the U.S., they settled in the Bay Area of California because of the value they placed on cultural diversity and community.

Around the time I was born, my father left a career in engineering to work as an early childhood educator. When I was four years old, he decided to go back to school to pursue a graduate degree in social work. He completed his program when I was six, had collected his hours for licensure when I was just shy of eight, and was fully licensed by the time I was nine. As a result, I was embedded in the concepts and theoretical constructs of U.S. psychology for most of my childhood, and raised in a context where the creative arts, social justice, and environmental protection were highly valued.

Being in school created greater flexibility in my father's schedule, and so contrary to typically prescribed gender roles, my mother was the primary breadwinner and my father was more frequently at home with me. My father admittedly understood our relationship through the lens of developmental psychology. His theoretical and clinical training clearly informed his approach to parenting. I can remember my father asking me about my dreams and loosely referring to Jungian symbolism. As I began to navigate more complex social situations, my father talked to me about the concept of defense mechanisms and non-violent communication strategies.

After being bullied at school, my parents decided to have me see a child psychologist. However, my experience as an only child in counseling was that I suddenly had an advocate or an intermediary between myself and my parents. My therapist helped me understand the limitations set by my parents as necessary, helped my parents see my communication and behavior as developmentally appropriate, and provided my parents with strategies for parenting a strong-willed and independent girl. I imagine my highly conflictual adolescent rebellion would

have been far worse had I not seen a therapist from ages 10 to 14. From this vantage point, my exposure to theories and practices of psychology most of my young life extended beyond my childhood into adolescent years, undeniably impacting my identity development.

Being less supported than her brothers to get a degree, my mother was adamant about me going to college. Given the cultural values and moral understandings that constituted my development, it is not surprising that I chose an institution that emphasized interdisciplinary education and communication across significant difference. My course selections during my first year evaluated the psychology behind the fundamentally unsustainable socioeconomic infrastructure of U.S. culture, with an eye towards ecology and plant biology. After my first year, I took a year off to become a Washington state resident. During this time, I worked on a farm, immersed myself in spiritual literature, and became a devotee to the *guru* of an international spiritual community. Upon my return to college, it became clear that learning outside the context of formal education had shifted my interests. I began to see how a workforce with varying levels of education sustains our social, economic, and political infrastructure in the U.S. I became critical of the morals conveyed in through texts, evaluative methods, and approaches to teaching, resenting how they reified the illusory American Dream. My love of meditative experience primed me to meet my mentor, Sarah Williams, a cultural anthropologist who taught a course on the relationship between the nuances of secular education and the danger of moral relativism. Under her tutelage, I developed a curriculum for a degree in contemplative education guided by feminist psychological principles. This included a thorough evaluation of the history of education and its roots in the monastic tradition, the practice of *Lectio Divina* (the contemplation of literature), the feminist psychological practice of *Ecriture Feminine* (embodied writing), the integration of Yoga Asanas and Yoga Nidra into institutional education and a study

of its impact, and an inquiry into service as a way of knowing led by the philosophy of Martin Buber and Ivan Illich. It was at this time that I engaged in a self-designed study abroad contract.

My training in Yoga and my experience teaching fueled my pursuit of a graduate degree in psychology. While my initial intent was to merge the traditions of Yoga and psychology, I became acutely aware of the moral complexity and theoretical impossibility of integrating two comprehensive cultural and historical traditions. I was exposed to philosophers like Gadamer and Heidegger who influenced my thinking about the nature of learning, interpreting, and the political implications of our social practices. I became sensitive to the continued practice of intellectual imperialism pervasive in academia, and the use of scientific research as a mechanism of cultural appropriation.

I began to understand my indoctrination into the field of psychology is an expression of the increasingly mechanized world of the neoliberal U.S. In this context, clinical interventions are predominantly understood as ahistorical and amoral. Our theoretical and practical training prepares us to be functional, efficient therapists capable of ensuring positive and predictable outcomes. The values placed on these facets of treatment is consistent with the overarching system of managed care. We receive recognition and reimbursement in relation to the number of evidence-supported certifications on our curriculum vitae.

Part of my theoretical training for treating adults included an intensive unit focused on Mindfulness Based Psychology (MBP). I never heard my professor admit to MBP as constitutive of selectively appropriated cultural practices that began with Vipassana meditation (Aronson, 2004; Bergkamp, 2007). My experience of Vipassana as a powerful practice within the Buddhist tradition caused me to recoil when seeing it reduced and decontextualized. While Buddhism includes its own system of psychology, only select academics in the field have

recently begun recognizing other indigenous systems of psychology (Christopher et al., 2013; & Christopher et al., 2014). When Vipassana is researched using Western scientific methods, many psychologists dismissed Buddhist psychology as religion, and instead focused their interest on the concrete practices within the tradition with an eye towards their instrumental value.

During this training on MBP, I was never encouraged to consider Buddhist conceptualizations of mind, mental illness, or psychological health. This training did not include an evaluation of whether Buddhist psychology and U.S. psychology are philosophically compatible. Instead, we learned to administer or guide mindfulness meditations in the context of neoliberalism. I realized that MBP administered in this context reinforces the cognitive agenda by asserting that the etiology of psychological suffering should be sourced in problematic thinking, and is not the result of an individual's relational life or their status or access within their social-political world (Sampson, 1981).

Mindfulness based psychology describes the root of suffering as the mental distortion of our otherwise peaceful nature. In our MBP training, we were instructed to help our clients identify problematic thoughts, label them "thinking", dismiss them, and return to a relaxed state of mind. This experience explained why MBP gained traction in the West, offering temporary respite from the untenable felt experience of our neoliberal world (Sugarman, 2015). It felt unethical to encourage clients to dissociate from their cognition, affect, and somatosensory experience, to deny the validity and utility of their innate interpretive system. It became clear to me that doing this was akin to cutting off my clients' ability to understand themselves and the world in which they live. By practicing MBP, I was teaching my clients to tolerate the discomfort of their circumstances and promoting complacency.

My previous encounter with Vipassana in the context of Buddhism was an experience

that taught me to become fundamentally embodied, to witness and tolerate my physical, emotional and psychological experience without reacting impulsively. While Buddhist practices help the practitioner detach from, observe, and respond rather than react to the bodymind, these practices are taught within a philosophical framework that safeguards against complacency. Buddhist philosophy conceptualizes the ego, or one's limited sense of self and personal preferences and aversions, as a barrier that creates suffering. From this perspective, our understanding of ourselves as self-contained individuals, separate from all existence creates a painful sense of isolation and obscures the truth of our interdependence. I could see the contrast between the value placed on non-attachment and non-violence within Buddhist philosophy and the hyper-individualistic and capitalistic instrumentalism of psychology in the U.S. Buddhist philosophy imparted a felt experience of interconnection and responsibility for the wellbeing of the other. I saw that when contextualized, Vipassana lays the foundation for embodied communal participation. This made clear to me how decontextualizing cultural practices to bolster the tradition of psychology has had unintended consequences. It also inspired curiosity about the relationship between the cultural context in which practices are enacted and their impact. Similar to the encounter with Buddhism, the growing popularity of Yoga in the U.S. had inspired psychologists to decontextualize practices and include them in clinical practice under the umbrella of MBP.

I have been fortunate to have instruction and supervision from psychologists who identify with relational or hermeneutic theory and who have helped me think about the world I participate in rather than to unconsciously reproduce it. Other psychologists pushed me to seek specialized training and certification to legitimize my desire to treat individuals within the context of the Yoga tradition. As a result of this pressure, I pursued training in Trauma Sensitive Yoga (TSY).

During this training, the theoretical rationale for TSY was explained using trauma theory, attachment theory, and neuroscience. TSY fails to preserve Sanskrit names, and does not reference the philosophy or theoretical framework of the Yoga tradition. In fact, aside from calling it Yoga, it neither credits or resembles Yogic tradition at all. Using neuroscience terms, like interoception to describe the mechanisms involved in cultivating self-awareness via concentration on physiological experience, facilitated its widespread acceptance. Further, TSY is easily manualized, supporting the evaluation of its efficacy using randomized clinical trials.

When we were taught to administer TSY, we were instructed not to use the word posture, the translation for *asana*, as it could be experienced as triggering for sexual abuse survivors. We were encouraged to call the *asanas* “forms” and to use invitational, rather than traditionally directive, language. During TSY, if a client becomes flooded with traumatic imagery or physiological distress, the instructor is trained to direct the client’s attention away from the memory and its associated cognition and affect, and to focus solely on their somatosensory experience. Instead, they are provided with options about how they might move their body and encouraged to make choices aimed at achieving a preferred bodily experience. This runs contrary to the traditional instruction to stay with and breathe through whatever arises in practice rather than simply move to relieve or avoid discomfort. This is in no way a complete description, but an attempt to highlight how the operational instructions of TSY run counter to the tradition of Yoga, and at times stand in direct opposition to its aim.

During the training, if I expressed discomfort with the cultural appropriation inherent to TSY I was met with narcissistic altruism. I was lectured on the inherent good of TSY, giving relief to the intense suffering of trauma survivors. When I questioned whether a method that specifically deconstructs one’s sense of identity was appropriate for chronic trauma survivors

who often need to scaffold a healthy and more stable sense of self, I was treated as if I was undereducated. This was demonstrated by referencing extensive neuroscientific research on the benefit of MBP to increase emotion regulation and distress tolerance. I expressed fear that TSY was potentially dismissive of experiences of neglect, abuse, and systemic oppression by refusing to acknowledge or discuss them in a meaningful way. I questioned whether this unconscious avoidance was felt by our clients as a potential reenactment of the original traumatic situation, concerned they may feel trapped into being compliant. I expressed discomfort with dissociating the social, political, and economic etiology of trauma. In dyads, I was treated as naïve when pointing to the power of dialogue to build solidarity, to make room for clients to think creatively about their experience, and to empower them to enact political change. Sadly, the resistance I faced when raising concerns about TSY was similar to confronting devotees about corruption within the spiritual community in which I was previously involved. My experience in the TSY training mirrors a trend where asking moral questions about the political implications of our social and professional practices is met with denial, placation, and patronizing or pathologizing characterizations that make it possible to isolate and ignore the person questioning.

Admittedly, my TSY training has given me a niche, making my services highly sought after within my residency. TSY obfuscates the reality that trauma cannot be easily resolved at the individual level. It sources the problem safely in the self-contained individual, dissociating the social, political, and economic etiology of trauma. But while the reductive simplicity of TSY and the false sense of confidence it offers is tempting, I have taken to discussing and using a hermeneutic application of Yogic psychology with my clients.

Summary of Personal Foregrounding

This section described some of my experiences with Yoga and U.S. psychology. I wrote that my reading of the source texts and ten articles would be influenced by my pre-understandings about Yoga and U.S. psychology, including disdain for the instrumental appropriation of cultural wisdom, frustration about the dissociation of other indigenous psychologies, and curiosity about the psychology embedded in the Yoga tradition. Before beginning the process of interpretation, I disclosed being consciously aware of the following assumptions:

- (a) My spiritual seeking was not purely altruistic, and may be best understood as an attempt to fill Cushman's (1995) "empty self" and as a result, my early relationship with Yoga was an expression of cultural appropriation.
- (b) My reliance on translated texts, commentary, and supplementary literature means that the literature on Yoga that I have encountered has come to me pre-articulated.
- (c) While I have sought to understand Yoga as a complex multidisciplinary tradition that is culturally and historically embedded, my training and practice of Yoga is inescapably reductive and decontextualized due to it having occurred predominantly within the context of U.S. culture.
- (d) I am admittedly suspicious of and resistant to the inescapable power inequities in the student/teacher and client/therapist relationship.
- (e) I believe the tradition of Yoga and the tradition of U.S. psychology are inherently incomplete, unfinished, and in a process of continual refinement.
- (f) I suspect it is possible for both traditions to benefit from an ethical encounter, where both are influenced without appropriation, and I am invested in identifying a culturally

respectful means to integrate U.S. psychology and Yoga.

- (g) While I care deeply about engaging in research, clinical practice, and cultural exchange that does not reinforce systemic oppression, I am also capable of unconsciously enacting the Enlightenment era values that circumscribe my academic training and cultural context.
- (h) My in-depth and lifelong involvement in U.S. psychology increases my tendency to see the theories and practices of this tradition as universal common sense.
- (i) Psychologists in the U.S. are given immense prescriptive and proscriptive power to define the self and cultural conceptions of the good.
- (j) The presentation of U.S. psychology and its theories and practices as ahistorical and amoral allows psychologists to assume a stance of ideological superiority that prevents a recognition of the tradition as indigenous to U.S. culture.
- (k) It is not popular to question whether the theories and practices of U.S. psychology effectively describe and treat suffering. Failure to produce results are more often explained through victim blaming, the improper application of method, or therapist impairment/incompetence.
- (l) While evidence-based treatments are often described as universally good, the reductive application of Yoga as an expression of MBP reinforces the cognitive agenda, resulting in compliance and complacency. I have significant concerns with regard to the harm this causes when working with already underprivileged populations.
- (m) The systems of psychology indigenous to other cultures are worthy of consideration, and genuine consideration means moving beyond dissociation and appropriation towards allowing the cherished beliefs and understandings of our own tradition to fall prey to

question.

Gadamer (1975) explained that it is possible only to foreground experiences that are “close at hand,” and that the interpreter cannot know which prejudices will assist or hinder interpretation. He insisted that a complete awareness of one’s prejudices is impossible and forever out of reach. As I encountered the literature, I ventured to increase my awareness of my horizon as it comes into contact with the horizon of the texts analyzed. I documented the pre-understandings that factored into my interpretation as they arose.

CHAPTER VII: THEMES

Shared Source Theme One: Yoga is a Tradition and Experiential Phenomenon

What follows is a presentation of the first theme shared by both source texts interpreted. Both texts effectively communicated that Yoga is both a multifaceted and interrelated collection of meanings and a state of being. To be readily understood, this two-part definition of Yoga begs further elaboration. In response, I have offered a definition and thematic discussion of both the tradition (part a) and the phenomena (part b). With regard to the former, both source texts describe the tradition of Yoga as inclusive of (but not limited to) an extensive and nuanced: theoretical framework, philosophy, psychology, medicine, science, cosmology, and moral vision. With regard to the latter, the phenomenon of Yoga is described as the experience of being undifferentiated never-changing consciousness (Unity), the source that differentiates into the myriad ever-changing names and forms of existence (Duality).

While the tradition of Yoga is undeniably spiritual, the tendency for Western academics to ignore, dismiss, or reject the traditions of the other based on religious affiliation is rooted in unconscious secular values (Christopher et al., 2014; Goodman, 2016). Thus, the choice to discuss Yoga in theoretical, philosophical, psychological and phenomenological terms was an intentional choice aimed at enlisting U.S. psychologists in the serious consideration of the tradition as a whole.

Subtheme A: Domains of Yogic Authority

Domains of Yogic authority within the Yoga Sûtras. A comprehensive discussion of a 5,000-year-old tradition is impossible within a single text let alone a single chapter. The aim of this section is to present quotations from YS that exemplify these identified facets of the Yoga tradition, allowing the reader to glimpse the breadth and depth. Both source texts alluded to or

overtly described eight facets of the Yoga tradition identified above. The Vedic influence on the Sûtras is evident in far fewer references to the medical facet or physiological practices of the Yoga tradition. Instead, the Sûtras primarily outline the theory, philosophy, psychology, and moral framework of Yoga, with fewer references to its practical application, science, and cosmology.

The tradition of Yoga consists of a complex network of interrelated concepts, and thus it does not fit neatly into discrete categories. However, for the purpose of clarity, quotes are organized under the following grouped and domains of Yogic authority: (a) Theory, philosophy, and psychology; (b) Practical application; (c) Science; (d) Cosmology; and (e) Moral vision. In the process of organizing quotes, several subthemes emerged. These subthemes were either discussed within the findings or inspired questions addressed towards the end of the chapter.

Theory, philosophy, and psychology. The choice to combine theory, philosophy, and psychology came from recognizing the overlap in supporting passages. This overlap made it virtually impossible to discuss one facet without the others. Interestingly, hermeneutic theory conceives of psychology as rooted in a tradition of theoretical and philosophical discourse about the nature of human being, the psyche, illness, and health. Yogic theory and philosophy recognizes mind, body (and even astral bodies) as one collective, where imbalance ripples through the whole, regardless of etiology.

The introduction of YS outlines the structure of the text, where sûtras are ordered and grouped into four books. Apparent in both the title and the content, the first two overtly describe the theory, philosophy, and practical application of Yoga. These books describe a Yogic theory of mind, embodied psyche, philosophy of duality and unified consciousness, an explanation of psychological imbalance, and a step-by-step description of realization as both the restoration of

balance and the realization of human potential.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.) defines psychology as “the science of mind and behavior, the mental or behavioral characteristics of an individual or group, and the study of mind and behavior in relation to a particular field of knowledge or activity” and by this definition, the tradition of Yoga as presented in YS is undeniably psychological. This is evidenced by an emerging subtheme: The Yoga tradition includes a holistic layered and multifaceted theory of bodymind that illuminates the relationship between the elements of earth, water, fire, air, and ether, the senses, and the mental faculties. Furthermore, Yoga describes a systemic and sequential process of awakening to pure consciousness as the Self.

This subtheme becomes apparent as early as the second sūtra in the first book (1.2). In his commentary on sūtra 1.2, Satchidananda outlines a layered theory of mind, where mental faculties function in a non-linear way, unpredictably setting one another in motion or functioning in tandem. The four layers of mind discussed by Satchidananda are: (a) *Manas*, the desiring mind drawn to outside objects/experiences through the senses; (b) *Ahamkara*, the ego or sense of identity that processes through the lens of I/me/mine; (c) *Buddhi*, the intellectual or discriminating faculty; and (d) *Chittam*, the sum total of these, a collection of all conscious and subconscious perceptions.

Satchidananda identified the etiology of *Manas* as the interaction between the elements and the sensory organs. He went further to describe *Manas* as an expression of the cyclical relationship between *samskaras* (memories or impressions), *vasanas* (powerfully reinforced tendencies), and *vritti* (mental modifications). He explained that the accumulation of *samskaras* contained in the *chitta* (singular of *chittam*) from all our experiences in past and present lives (alluding to the concepts of reincarnation and karma) result in the development of powerful

drives (*vasana*). The *vasana*, rich with *samskara*, give rise to thoughts or desires (*vriddhi*) as the impetus for action. Thus, the cycle flows; the accumulation of *samskara* create *vasana*, *vasana* give rise to *vriddhi*, *vriddhi* when acted upon leave further *samskara*, reinforcing *vasana*, and so on. Hence, *Manas* is comprised of the recognition of objects or anticipation of potential sense experiences based on *samskaras* and the generation of corresponding *vriddhi* by *vasana* that inspire further action.

Satchidananda defined the *Ahamkara* as the ego or what comprises one's sense of identity. He explained the function of the *Ahamkara* as the processing of what is perceived through the lens of I, me, and mine. It is our identification with experiences that causes them to leave an impression or *samskara*, and all *vasana* can be classified as either *raga* (attachment) or *dvesha* (aversion). The following sūtras illustrate the relationship between the *Ahamkara*, *raga*, and *dvesha*: (a) "Egoism is the identification, as it were, of the power of the Seer (*Purusha*), with the instrument of seeing (bodymind)" (Book 2, Sūtra 6, p. 89); (b) "Attachment is that which follows identification with pleasurable experiences" (Book 2, Sūtra 7, p. 90); and (c) "Aversion is that which follows identification with painful experiences" (Book 2, Sūtra 8, p. 90). The relationship between *ahamkara*, *raga*, and *dvesha* is at the center of another subtheme and philosophical precept of Yoga: Ignorance is the root of suffering, where our identification with the bodymind causes us to chase after pleasure and avoid pain. Sūtra 2.5 defines ignorance as "...seeing the impermanent as permanent, the impure as pure, the painful as pleasant, and the non-self as self" (p. 86). In his commentary Satchidananda cited examples of ego such as the unconscious tendency to describe oneself in terms of physical and psychological characteristics, to speak of one's changing needs, desires, or states, and to identify with the actions and performance of the bodymind. Sūtra 2.17 points to the unnecessary pain caused by mistaking

seer (*purusha*, or witness consciousness) with seen (*prakriti*, one's nature or bodymind). The following two sūtras explicitly define Seer and seen: (a) "The Seer is nothing but the power of seeing which, although pure, appears to see through the mind" (Book 2, Sūtra 20, p. 109), (b) "The seen is the nature of the *Gunas*: illumination, activity, and inertia; and consists of the elements and sense organs, whose purpose is to provide experiences and liberation to the *Purusha*" (Book 2, Sūtra 18, p. 104).

Satchidananda defined nature as a combination of elements and organs in his commentary on sūtra 2.18. He identified these organs as the intellect, mind, senses, and body. From this, another subtheme emerged: Mind, body, and nature (the whole of existence) cannot be understood or effectively treated as separate. This is reinforced by the innumerable references to the bodymind throughout YS, and suggests that bodily interventions would fall under the umbrella of Yogic psychology. In further commentary on this sūtra, he described how experiences in the bodymind produce a rollercoaster of unpredictable pleasure and pain. He illustrated that by clinging to pleasure and avoiding pain we resist change. He described the tension we experience when we fight change and the peace we feel when we relax into it as the fundamental constant of nature. He explained that the more we enjoy sensual experiences, the more we cling to the body, the more we are bound by *raga* and *dvesha*, and the more we suffer when facing inevitable loss. He further clarified that the purpose of nature is to create experiences that result in suffering, emphasizing the importance of suffering as fueling a longing beyond sense gratification and a desire for liberation from the bodymind.

In his commentary on sūtra 2.20, Satchidananda described *purusha* as the never changing consciousness animating and differentiating into the ever-changing names and forms of nature. He explained that *purusha* never experiences and only witnesses the interaction between the

organs of perception and the elements being perceived. Later, sūtra 2.27 references the “final stage of wisdom” (p. xx), where one recognizes the doer is not the self and *Ahamkara* is directed solely towards the *purusha*. The sūtra explains that reaching this state results in the cessation of sorrow, fear, delusion, the desire to know, to avoid, to attach, to acquire, and to act.

Satchidananda explained that the intellectual or discriminating faculty (*Buddhi*) is ideally used to cultivate non-attachment. Sūtra 1.12 describes the role of *vairagya* (non-attachment) in restraining the *vritti*, and restoring tranquility to the mind. Satchidananda’s commentary elucidated how *Buddhi* can be employed determine whether a *vritti* and its corresponding action leads one towards or away from *purusha*. More simply put, the *Buddhi* can identify whether a *vritti* and its corresponding action is selfish or selfless, and that this practice of discernment results in the cultivation of *vairagya*. Sūtra 1.16 states, “When there is non-thirst for even the *gunas* (constituents of nature) due to realization of the *purusha* (true self), that is supreme non-attachment” (p. 28). The commentary on this sūtra illustrated that the more one identifies with *Purusha*, or experiences the bliss of being pure consciousness (the phenomenon of Yoga), the less fleeting sensual experiences appear desirable.

The philosophical concept and phenomenological description of the self as pure consciousness leads directly into this subtheme: The fleeting pleasures gained through sensual experiences in the bodymind are a drop of water when compared to the ocean of bliss that is ones’ true nature. This theme is referenced throughout YS beginning in the introduction, when Satchidananda states the ultimate aim of Yoga as:

...nothing less than the total transformation of a seemingly limited physical, mental, and emotional person into a fully illumined, thoroughly harmonized and perfected being — from an individual with likes and dislikes, pains and pleasures, successes and failures, to

a sage of permanent peace, joy and selfless dedication to all of creation. (p. xx)

Satchidananda named the resistance people feel with regard to employing the *Buddhi* in the practice of discernment and self-discipline. He explained that this resistance is caused by associating renunciation and deprivation and a failure to discern the difference between fleeting enjoyment and lasting happiness. He clarified that even a glimpse of the infinite peace and contentment of Yoga lessens our pursuit of sense gratification.

Satchidananda emphasized that no worldly action can produce lasting happiness, that attachment to temporary pleasure always results in pain. Sûtra 2.15 states:

To one of discrimination, everything is painful indeed, due to its consequences: the anxiety and fear over losing what is gained; the resulting impressions left in the mind to create new cravings; and the constant conflict among the *gunas*, which control the mind.

(p. 100)

In his commentary on this sûtra, Satchidananda used the temporary enjoyment created by money as an example. He described how obtaining wealth can create intense fear of losing that wealth, and that this fear produces greed expressed as an insatiable drive to acquire or secure more. He emphasized that while happiness is contagious, real pleasure results from non-attachment, and that to be carefree one needs a well-controlled mind. He described the need to fervently seek only lasting bliss, and warned that temptations become more intense as one progresses. He cautioned that enjoying the world before cultivating non-attachment will cause us to get lost or hooked. He stated that by having one eye always fixed on the Self within, referencing the third eye, all worldly enjoyments can be ours without risk. With regard to temporary pleasures, he stated, “If they come to you, let them come; enjoy their presence. But when they go, enjoy their departure too” (p. 101).

Satchidananda explained that the original condition of *chittam* is still, like the surface of undisturbed water, reflecting consciousness as the source of being. From this peaceful state, *vritti* ripple up. He described that our experience of pleasure and pain is simply the result of our mind's interpretation. He said, "The outside world only reflects or distorts our own inner state" (p. 89). Satchidananda reinforced that the first six limbs of practice are in service of returning the water of *chittam* to a state of tranquility, and that this one-pointed concentration needed to maintain this tranquility is preparation for psychological awakening or the process of self-realization.

The theoretical and philosophical tenants of Yogic psychology understand the body as one with nature (that which is manifest), and the psyche as one with cosmic consciousness (that which is unmanifest). Our belief in ourselves as self-contained individuals is seen as a kind of cognitive distortion at the root of all suffering. YS offers a theoretical explanation for how we forget, wrongly identifying with the bodymind, and provides a systemic method for how we remember the truth of human being. The incremental stages of this remembering or realization is described as different types of *samadhi*. Satchidananda expounds on *samadhi* as the eighth and final limb as both the culmination of the tradition and the phenomenon of Yoga itself. Sûtras 1.17 – 1.19 refer to two different types of *samadhi*, *samprajnata* (distinguished) and *asamprajnata* (undistinguished). Of these two types, there are four stages of *samprajnata samadhi* the practitioner achieves before becoming established in *asamprajnata samadhi*. Satchidananda explains that *samadhi* is only possible after *dharana* is mastered, and a continuous state of *dyana* is experienced, as *samadhi* necessitates that the whole mind be absorbed.

Samprajnata samadhi is distinguished by the continued presence of the "reasoning,

reflecting, rejoicing, pure I-am-ness” (p. 31). The four stages of *Samprajnata samadhi* mirror the four divisions of nature. The practitioner must experience union with and thus fully comprehend the layers of her own nature, moving from the most gross to the most subtle. The Four stages are: (a) *Savitarka samadhi* (gross material); (b) *Savichara samadhi* (subtle/elemental, or *tanmatras*); (c) *Sa-ananada samadhi* (mind or *chittam*); and (d) *Sa-asmita samadhi* (ego/individuality). Only when the ego has been transcended and *vritti* cease to disturb *chittam*, does the practitioner experience non-distinguished or *asamprajnata samadhi*. In this final samadhi, *samskaras* become mute and one is no longer the pawn of desire. One is then said to be “in the world but not of it.” (p. 36).

The concept of sequential awakening highlights another subtheme: To remain steadfast in the realization of self as unified consciousness is the aim of the tradition. This subtheme is illustrated as early as the preface, where Satchidananda pointed to Patanjali’s aim in compiling the sūtras as helping, “all attain the highest *samadhi*, the totally liberated state. This liberation is not for the remote future or for when we die; it is to be lived in the midst of the world” (p. v-vi). This subtheme is not meant to be redundant regarding the dual definition of Yoga as a tradition and a phenomenological state, and the nuances of this subtheme are fully explored in the broader theme.

Practical application. It is noteworthy that while there is overt mention of specific practices, YS does not provide instruction for any given practice. This may be indicative of the import given to the *guru* as gatekeeper, gauging the readiness of their disciples and giving specific tailored instruction for practice only when one can tolerate and integrate the effects. Instead of specific instruction, YS primarily describes the impact of different practices to elicit

specific phenomenological experiences as part of the sequential and incremental process of awakening.

By first discussing the obstacles to practice and their etiology, the theoretical rationale for the sequence and content of the eight limbs of Yogic practice is established. Sûtra 2.29 names these sequential stages of practice as: *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dyana*, and *samadhi*. *Yama* and *niyama* are moral guidelines designed to create a lifestyle with the fewest obstacles to practice. *Asana* and *pranayama* are postures and breathing practices designed to detoxify, revitalize, and prepare the bodymind for subtle practice. In this way, *asana* and *pranayama* remove the physiological or energetic obstacles to practice. *Pratyahara* is a set of practices designed to redirect the senses inward to sense the self. By not gratifying the senses, *pratyahara* results in a reduction of psychological obstacles or *vritti*, preparing the mind to practice concentration. *Dharana* is the practice of one pointed concentration, which when achieved results in spontaneous states of meditation, or *dyana*, where the mind is free of thoughts. As the episodes of *dyana* increase in frequency and length, the underlying truth of the self as undisturbed pure consciousness is revealed, resulting in blissful periods of complete absorption, or *samadhi*.

As stated before, the introduction overtly describes the second book of YS as dedicated to the practical application of Yoga. However, a more accurate description might be the theory and philosophy surrounding practice and in truth guidance about the ideal approach and conditions for practice litter all four books. This is certainly true of the first book, where Sûtra 1.13 defines practice as, “effort towards steadiness of mind” (p. 19) and sûttras 1.14 – 1.22 explain ideal attributes of or attitudes towards practice. These sûttras suggest that passionate and sustained effort, focused attention, discernment, and consistency improves the likelihood of reaping the

desired benefits and increasing the pace of progress. Sûtra 1.32 conveys that using one approach or technique can reduce obstacles to practice, however, the commentary emphasized dedication, perseverance, and reverence as more important than the technique itself. What follows is another example of the guidance regarding a seeker's ideal attitude: "By cultivating attitudes of friendliness toward the happy, compassion for the unhappy, delight in the virtuous, and disregard toward the wicked, the mind-stuff retains its undisturbed calmness" (sûtra 1.33, p. 54).

Satchidananda described this sûtra as a compass for him, helping him cultivate equanimity of mind, preserving his vitality by dispelling jealousy, fear, hate, and worry.

Sûtra 1.23 illustrates the power of a seeker's devotion to elicit the attitudes and qualities that best facilitate practice. In the commentary on this sûtra, Satchidananda discusses devotion as the fastest path to awakening. He described devotion as comparable to falling in love, capable of capturing the whole of one's attention. The constant contemplation of one's beloved is referred to as an expression of one-pointed concentration. Furthermore, the effect of devotion to illicit surrender as a crucial element of practice is also explored. The repeated mention and emphasis on surrender as the guiding principle of effective practice emerged as a subtheme: Without an attitude of surrender as the mechanism of non-attachment, practice will fail to yield fruit, or the fruits harvested will be squandered on the ego. In this context, to surrender is a willingness to renounce the endless pursuit of sense enjoyment and relinquish the need to resist or react to pain, loss, and suffering. In this way surrender is the primary mechanism of *vairagya*.

Surrender as the mechanism of *vairagya* is presented as a means to circumvent the ego. The ego, or the identification with bodymind, is described as the root of suffering and the greatest barrier to psychological awakening. Satchidananda pointed out the paradox that

unhindered efficacy, uninterrupted bliss, and absolute freedom can only be experienced by surrendering our desire for and attachment to them. To illustrate this point, he stated:

...when the mind is free from personal interest we do our work well and feel joyful. Our lives become meaningful. If our minds are free from selfishness and there is sacrifice in everyone's lives, the very world becomes a heaven, an abode of peace and bliss. (p. 26)

Satchidananda described how attachment to the outcome of our efforts misdirects our mental faculties, drawing them away from the task at hand and reducing the quality of our work. He further explained the liberating effect of surrendering the fruits of our action and the bliss experienced when we release the drive for personal gain.

There are repeated warnings throughout YS about attachment to the pace, progress, or outcome of practice. Satchidananda quoted Vedantic scripture, saying, "Even the desire for liberation is a bondage" (p. 24). This is interesting given that book three is almost entirely devoted to describing *siddhis* that a *yogini* can experience as the result of practicing the *samyama* (a combination of the final three of the eight limbs of Yoga: *dharana*, *dyana*, and *samadhi*). The *siddhis* resulting from *samyama* on a particular object, subject, or concept include: omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience; the power to transcend and manipulate the laws of physics; abilities such as invisibility, psychokinesis, telepathy, levitation, and astral projection; superhuman speed, motionlessness, and silence; bodily perfection, such as beauty and radiance; the willful transformation of the body's elemental characteristics; transcendence of ones' physiological needs; supernatural hearing, touch sight, taste, smell experienced spontaneously and intuitively; the ability to possess the strength of powerful animals, seismic and metalogic events, and a general mastery over the gross and subtle elements. Satchidananda admits his commentary on the sūtras in book three is intentionally vague. While not stated overtly, his

paucity in commentary appears to be an effort to avoid fueling his students' potential desire for power. This is mirrored in sūtra 3.51, "By non-attachment even to that (all of these *siddhis*), the seed of bondage is destroyed and thus follows *Kaivalya* (independence)" (p. 199). In his commentary on this sūtra, Satchidananda encouraged his disciples to make every action one of service, to surrender the pursuit of personal gain, and to offer the fruits of their practice to the whole of creation. He emphasized that the *siddhis* are a thrilling experience of human potential, and while the practitioner need not resist them if they come, they should not be sought out.

The first concrete reference to a method of practice (later identified as *pratipaksha bhavanam*) was a brief description of the application of discriminative discernment in cultivating *vairagya*. Satchidananda explains that in the beginning, it is futile to still the mind. He stated that at the outset of practice, the mind must be enlisted so that it does not resist. Instead, practitioners are encouraged to notice the quality of the *vrittis*, ignore those that fuel selfish aims, and attend to those that promote selflessness. Satchidananda compared this process with sorting garbage and argued that this initial practice of discernment helps us loosen the grip of desire. *Pratipaksha bhavanam* is later elaborated on in book two as preparation for *dharana*.

The second overt reference to a method of practice follows a theoretical explanation for the *bija mantra* (seed sound) Om and its philosophical significance. Satchidananda commented on OM as the origin, preservation, and culmination of all sound:

The entire *Mandukya Upanishad* expounds the meaning of Om. There it divides Om into four stages, A, U, M, and *anagata*, or the one who is beyond verbal pronunciation. A is the beginning of all sound, every language begins with the letter A or 'ah.' A is pronounced by simply opening the mouth and making a sound. That sound is produced in the throat where the tongue is rooted. So, audible sound begins with A. Then as the

sound comes forward between the tongue and the palate up to the lips U or “oo” is produced. Then closing the lips produces M. So, the creation is A, the preservation is U, and the culmination is M. So, A-U-M includes the entire process of sound, and all other sounds are contained within it. Thus, OM is the origin or seed from which all other sounds come...Om is dormant in all other sound. (p. 44).

Satchidananda further commented on *anagata* as the fourth stage and the source of Om. This source is also referred to as *pranava*, which translates as humming. Satchidananda explained that this hum emanates from all things, present and detectible even in silence or stillness. He elaborated, saying:

Even thinking creates sound, because thought itself is a form of speaking. By thinking you distort the original sound, which transcends the beginning, continuation, and culmination of OM. To listen to that sound you have to keep your mind quiet, stop the thinking process and dive within. Then you can hear that hum. (p. 44).

This commentary on OM points to a philosophical concept referred to so frequently it merits another subtheme: As you think, so you become. Satchidananda describes the progression of thoughts giving way to action, the repetition of action forming habits and how habits in turn shape character. He claimed all forms of speech has the power to manifest (including thought as internal speech) and that vibration can both create and destroy. He went further to describe how OM (and *bija* mantras in general) have the power to transform the speaker, seeding the development of characteristics or qualitative states. This explanation, and the two sūtras following it refer to the practice of mantra *japa* as one that circumvents the mind. This is mirrored in sūtra 1.28, where an intellectual understanding of the words spoken in the practice of

mantra *japa* is described as less relevant than attention, reverence, and emotion as the primary mechanisms of change.

The first mention of *pranayama* as another practice that steadies the mind occurs in the first book. No specific practice is explained, but sūtra 1.34 suggests, "...calm is retained by the controlled exhalation or retention of the breath" (p. 57). The ensuing commentary draws a connection between breath and mind, and mentions the phenomenon of *kevala kumbhaka* (the spontaneous or effortless retention of breath). Later in the first book, Patanjali makes suggestions for possible foci in the practice of concentration, but ultimately concludes that one can concentrate on "anything one chooses that is elevating" (sūtra 1.39, p. 62). Finally, at the close of book one, Patanjali gives the reader a glimpse of the process of awakening, hinting at the advanced practices involved in eliciting the sequential stages of *samadhi*.

The sūtra that introduces the second book discusses the second limb of Yoga, *niyama*, and cites the following three of these five observances as the fundamental components of practice: *tapas* (austerity), *svadhyaya* (study of scripture), and *isvara pranidhanani* (surrender). Satchidananda describes *Isvara pranidhanani* as making an offering of both effort and the fruits of that effort, and *svadhyaya* as any study that elevates the mind and gives the practitioner insight into the true nature of the self. In his commentary Satchidananda referred to Yoga as a form of psychology by distinguishing it from "other psychological approaches" (p. 82). He explained that other psychologies adhere to the belief that nothing can be understood without the mind, whereas Yoga claims there is knowledge and understanding beyond the mind and that all knowledge obtained via the mind is limited and conditional.

The concept of *tapas* introduces an additional subtheme: Suffering itself has value and welcoming suffering is beneficial. A brief explanation of the three-pronged meaning of *tapas* is

helpful in understanding how Patanjali suggests practice be approached with a willingness to endure suffering. *Tapas* is difficult to translate, as it encompasses the following three concepts:

(a) The fire of will, (b) The fire of purification, and (c) A willingness to endure suffering.

Satchidananda describes the symbolism of fire in this context as a form of alchemy, fire having the power to purify metal and will as an expression of power. The concept of *tapas* mirrors the Ayurvedic concept of *agni* (digestive fire), and also points to the theoretical concept of *chakras* (energy centers in the subtle body), where the third *chakra* governs both digestion and willpower (Frawley, 1999). The concept of *tapas* also offers a unique presentation of willpower as reflexive. *Tapas* implies willpower should be inhibited, kept to a minimum where effort is made to maintain a posture of receptivity, a kind of effortless effort. This suggests all doing ought to support the aim of disidentifying with the doer, ego, or bodymind. Satchidananda suggests that welcoming suffering makes visible the link between pleasure and pain, reducing the allure of fleeting sense gratification, and relaxing our grip on the bodymind. To practice *tapas* causes one to associate the bodymind with suffering rather than clinging to it as our only source of enjoyment, thus leading to *vairagya*.

Sûtra 2.2 explains that the primacy given to the three observances in sûtra 2.1 is due to their ability to reduce the obstacles to achieving *samadhi*. The subsequent eight sûtras name and explain the following five obstacles each practitioner must overcome through practice: ignorance, ego, attachment, hatred, and clinging to bodily life. In the previous book, sûtras 1.30 and 1.31 name 13 ways practice can be derailed or delayed. These are disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, sensuality, false perception, failure to reach firm ground, and slipping from ground gained, distress, despair, trembling of the body, and disturbed thinking. The

proceeding 17 Sûtras explain how the type and expression of obstacles are unique to each person, are rooted in *karma*, and can be overcome through specific types of practice.

Notably, the remainder of book two is almost completely devoted to a discussion of the first two limbs of Yoga, *yama* and *niyama*. Sûtra 2.30 identifies the following five restrictions that comprise *yama*: *ahimsa*, *satya* (abstaining from lying), *asteya*, *brahmacharya*, and *aparigraha*. Sûtra 2.32 identifies the following five observances that comprise *niyama*: *saucha* (purity), *santosha* (contentment), *tapas* (austerity), *svadhyaya*, and *isvara pranidhanani*. A more in-depth discussion of the five facets of *yama* and *niyama* is provided in the section on the moral framework of the Yoga tradition.

Only two sûtras address *asana* which are the postures of Yoga. This is intriguing given that *asana* has become the central focus of Yoga in the U.S. The two sûtras on Yoga essentially convey that the purpose of the *asana* practice is to purify the bodymind, making it steady and comfortable in a seated position, so that meditation can be sustained for long periods. Four sûtras address *pranayama*, or the practice of breath control. These sûtras communicate the importance of regulating the breath, the relationship between agitated breath and a restless bodymind, the practice of *kumbhaka* (breath retention), and the experience of *kevala kumbhaka* (spontaneous cessation of breath) during *dyana*. The last two sûtras of book two address *pratyahara* as a practice designed to gain mastery over the senses.

While the stages of samadhi are described in the latter half of book one, a discussion of *dharana* and *dyana* does not occur until book three. In his commentary on sûtra 3.1, Satchidananda defines *dharana* as *chittam* concentrated on one point, or one-pointed concentration. A description of *trataka* (gazing, often using the flame of a candle) is given as an example of a practice that cultivates *dharana*. Sûtra 3.2 defines *dyana* as *sustained* one-pointed

concentration, where the mind is undisturbed by thoughts, and Sûtra 3.3 defines *samadhi* as the culmination of *dyana* where union with the object of concentration is achieved. The practice of *samyama* is described as the combination of *dharana*, *dyana*, and *samadhi*, where the object of concentration moves from gross to subtle subsequently leads one through the different levels of *samadhi* (as discussed earlier in the section on theory, philosophy, and psychology). On this, Satchidananda commented:

Nobody can consciously practice *samadhi*. Our effort is there only up to meditation. You put all your effort in *dharana*. It becomes effortless in *dhyana*; and you are just there, knowing that you are in meditation. But in *samadhi*, you don't even know that. *You* are not there to know it because you *are* that. (p. 175)

The remainder of book three covers the many *siddhis* that result from the practice of *samyama*.

Science. Satchidananda describes Yoga as a rigorous and complete “science of mind” (p. XI) innumerable times throughout YS. Due to the globalization of Western values, the word science has come to be associated with the doctrine of objectivity and methods of inquiry developed in Europe during the enlightenment era. Satchidananda alludes to the tendency to privilege certain types of terminology in the following explanation of consciousness as a phenomenon:

If I use the term “spirit” or “Self” you might hesitate to believe me, but if the physicist says the wall is nothing but energy you will believe that. So, using the physicists language, there is nothing but energy everywhere. Even the atom is a form of energy. The same energy appears in different forms to which we also give different names. So the form and name are just different versions of the same energy. And, according to the

Yogic scientists like Patanjali – and even many modern scientists – behind the different forms of energy is one unchanging consciousness... (p. 8)

As obstacles can arise from readers' contextual associations with terminology, I am referring to science as “the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.); while an experiment is defined as, “a procedure undertaken to make a discovery, test a hypothesis, or demonstrate a known fact” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Based on this definition, the systemic methods of inquiry and the centuries of data accumulated and compiled suggests the tradition of Yoga includes, or could itself be considered, a science.

Two distinguishing facets of Yogic science are: (a) Significant value is placed on subjective interpretation, and (b) The subject/object being investigated need not be isolated from its context to be understood. That subjective interpretation is highly valued is mirrored in sūtra 1.7, where direct experience is described as the most valid and reliable source of knowledge. Satchidananda repeatedly encourages readers to gauge the truth of the sūtras through practice. He stated, “practice is the most important part of Yoga” (p. V), and later affirmed that Yoga, “... welcomes and in fact demands experimental verification by students” (p. XI). This is echoed again towards the end of book two when he states, “Yoga is not a philosophy to be followed with blind faith” (p. XX), again urging readers to gain confidence and certainty through direct experience.

Yogic methods of experimentation, inquiry, or investigation are contemplative, employing concentration and meditation to gain knowledge. Satchidananda described one Yogic method of inquiry previously identified in the last section as *samyama*. With regard to *samyama* he said:

The moment the purely focused mind contemplates an object, it goes to the very depth of that object and understands every particle of it. A focused mind gains power, and when that powerful mind concentrates on an object the entire knowledge of that object is revealed to it. (p. 32)

This, and all other Yogic methods of inquiry insist that what is observed be seen as it is, embedded in a matrix of physical and/or conceptual relationships. Both of these tenants of Yogic science point to a previously mentioned concept that emerged as another subtheme: All knowledge obtained via the mind is limited and conditional, and knowing beyond (or without) mind is closer to experience than intellectual understanding. Satchidananda reflected on this theme when he said, “We can hear things, study, form our own opinions, use our imagination, but nothing can equal experience” (p. 82). Commenting on the limitations of the mind, he said, “Only when you transcend the mind can you understand it” (p. 82). Further explaining the primacy of experience, he said, “...all our knowledge comes through experience. Without experience we cannot understand or learn anything” (p. 91). Even the emphasis put on practice within the tradition of Yoga is a reflection of this theme. Thus, Yogic science attempts to supersede the mind in the study of self and world.

Cosmology. While the fourth book of YS is described in the introduction as covering the “cosmic philosophy” (p. XI) of Yoga, both source texts only vaguely reference Yogic cosmology. Regardless, the overarching theme of Yoga as a tradition makes relevant the source of that tradition in a rich theoretical discourse surrounding the origin and development of the universe. A thorough explanation of Yogic cosmology can be found in the *Bhagavata Purana*. Moreover, both the third and fourth volume of the *Yoga Vasistha* are full of stories laden with mythic symbolism related to the origin of existence.

Two diverging perspectives on the theory of existence are responsible for the development of Vedanta and Tantra. YS is rooted in the Vedantic Yoga, which holds that all material existence is an illusion of the mind. This illusion is referred to as *maya* and is often credited with the creation of desire and distaste. Satchidananda alluded to the concept of *maya* when he stated:

But behind all these differences, in the Self, we never differ. That means behind all these ever-changing phenomena is a never-changing One. That One appears to change due to our mental modifications...If only we could understand this point, we could see that there is nothing wrong outside, it is all in the mind. By correcting our vision we correct things outside...That is why Yoga is based on self-reformation, self-control, and self-adjustment. (p. 9)

From this perspective, the bodymind itself is seen as a part of *maya*, and our identification with it is responsible for our suffering. On this Satchidananda claimed, “Ultimately, nobody can achieve eternal peace by doing something with the mind, which is a part of nature” (p. 41). This is again mirrored in his commentary on sūtra 1.18:

Nature is a combination of elements and organs. The organs include the intellect, mind, senses, and the body. Normally, we think of nature as being something other than our own bodies, but when we feel we are the true Self even the body becomes part of nature, because it, again, is merely a composition of the elements...Even the mind, senses, and intellect are part of nature, although a very subtle part. They are matter, and that’s why they change. Anything that is matter, or nature, changes. (p. 105)

The bodymind as a part of *maya* is understood in instrumental terms, and is described as such by Satchidananda when he said, “Life is experienced by the mind through the body. The body is only a vehicle or instrument” (p. 98).

Regardless of the differences in the significance attributed to material existence, both source texts, YS and HYP, describe an etiology of existence derived from a shared cosmology. This cosmology describes the origin of the universe as undifferentiated pure consciousness, or *purusha*, peaceful and undisturbed (Frawley, 1990). In that state of being, there was no recognition of Self, the Self simply was. It is said that *purusha*'s decision to create duality, to differentiate into the infinite and ever-changing names and forms of existence, came from her desire to know herself. Satchidananda points to this cosmic philosophy in his commentary on sūtra 2.23, “Through the *Prakriti* (nature, constitution, or individual bodymind), we realize we are the *Purusha*. If not for *Prakriti*, we could not know ourselves. So *Prakriti* isn't just bondage as many people think, it is necessary” (p. 114). Sūtras 2.18 and 2.19 refer to the origin, purpose, and resolution of the *gunas* and hint at theories about the structure and function of the cosmos. The significance of the *gunas* with regard to Yogic cosmology is exemplified in sūtras 4.33 and 4.34, which describe that upon realization of *purusha*, the *gunas* cease to transform having fulfilled their purpose. In his commentary on sūtra 4.34, Satchidananda echoed these theories about the origin and development of the universe when he describes *purusha* coming full circle to recognize itself, “It is settled. It is happy in its own true nature. It is no longer seeking happiness and peace from outside, because it realizes it *is* happiness personified” (p. 231).

Moral vision. The subthemes identified as comprising the moral vision of the tradition vary between the source texts due to the fundamental differences between Vedantic and Tantric Yoga. The most overt of these differences is the emphasis placed on the first two limbs of Yoga,

yama and *niyama*. While the role and importance of *yama* and *niyama* is to minimize obstacles to practice, the actions and attitudes proscribed and prescribed convey moral understandings of the good.

Sûtra 2.30 identifies the following five restrictions that comprise *yama*: *ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacharya*, and *aparigraha*. What follows is a brief discussion of each restriction, its significance, moral implications, and link to subthemes.

The first restriction, *ahimsa*, is more accurately translated as non-harming or “not causing pain” (p. 125). Satchidananda clarified that *ahimsa* applies not only to physical harm, but also to emotional, psychological, and spiritual harm as well. He explained that these subtle forms of harm can have more severe and wide-ranging consequences, and urges readers to purge their thoughts, words, and deeds of harm. With regard to the benefit of *ahimsa*, sûtra 2.35 states, “In the presence of one firmly established in non-violence, all hostilities cease” (p. 130). In his commentary on this sûtra, Satchidananda explained that when a person is seated firmly in non-violence, their thoughts, words, and deeds communicate positivity and safety. He claimed that when one is seated in *ahimsa*, the vibrations of their being become harmonious, having a disarming effect on those around them and the environment itself. Satchidananda discussed the life of Mahatma Gandhi as an example, described how Gandhi disclosed his difficulty fully embodying *ahimsa*, and said, “Perhaps if Gandhi’s practice had been perfected, his assassin might have forgotten the idea of shooting Gandhi when he came into Gandhi’s presence” (p. 131).

The value of *ahimsa* highlights an additional subtheme: Devotion to justice, harmony, and balance honors the unified nature of existence. Repeated references to social and environmental justice litter all four books. Satchidananda explained in the introduction that the

tradition of Yoga, if sincerely practiced, leads to the experience of Yoga, which inspires “selfless dedication to the entire creation” (p. xiii). He later argued that our identification with our limited individual bodymind is what creates selfishness, competition, and violence, and that without this identification, “there is no difference between you and me” (p. 8). Later in this passage he explained that whether animate or inanimate, “the form and name are just different versions of the same energy...one unchanging consciousness” (p. 8) and that only when we fully experience this will we, “love our neighbors as our own self” (p. 8). Echoes of this subtheme will become apparent in the discussion of the remaining *yamas* and *niyamas*.

The second *yama* is *satya*, which Satchidananda said extends to white lies and lies of omission. Sûtra 2.36 addresses the benefit that comes from being established in truth. This sûtra claims that when one endeavors to always speak truth, actions and their ideal outcomes become effortless and automatic. In his commentary on this sûtra, Satchidananda explained that by purifying speech, the power of words increase, and that one must be careful not to misuse this power. Furthermore, Satchidananda linked honesty and fearlessness, saying, “With establishment in honesty...One need not be afraid...when there are no lies, the entire life becomes an open book” (p. 131).

The third *yama*, *asteya*, suggests the practitioner should abstain from theft. In his commentary on this *yama*, Satchidananda explains that taking more than one needs is also considered theft. He said:

All of us are thieves. Knowingly or unknowingly, we steal things from nature. With every minute, with each breath, we pick nature’s pocket...But that doesn’t mean we should stop breathing and die. Instead we should receive each breath with reverence and

use it to serve others; then we are not stealing. If we accept it and don't give anything in return, we are thieves. (p. 133).

This subtle presentation of theft harkens back to the concept of justice mentioned in another subtheme. Satchidananda continued this thread, explaining that not sharing is another form of theft. He described that from the standpoint of Yogic theory, all land and resources are part of the same living body, and should not be claimed as the sole property of any one person.

While discussing *aparigraha*, Satchidananda articulates a direct connection between greed and theft. While discussing *asteya*, he stated, “We steal because of greed. We want to do a little and get a lot” (p. 133). He argued that while we believe that having more creates security, the result is actually increased stress and tension. He presented technological innovation as futile when there is a paucity of base moral understanding, saying:

In the richest country in the world, it is a pity to see things like hospitals being closed for lack of funds while billions are spent on rockets, spacecrafts and bombers. Is it more necessary to go to the moon than to take care of our neighbors? I don't negate scientific inventions, and developments. They are fine. We can all ride to the moon, but only after everyone has been well-fed, clothed, and educated. (p. 135)

Satchidananda argued that real wealth is happiness, and that lasting happiness is experienced in conjunction with surrendering the pursuit of material gain. Finally, with regard to *aparigraha* he warned that one should not accept gifts, as it “makes us lose our neutrality” (p. 141), and clarity of mind cannot be achieved while perturbed by desire and obligation.

Celibacy, or *brahmacharya* is the remaining *yama* to be discussed. Sûtra 2.38 discusses the power obtained through celibacy and Satchidananda's commentary explained how the loss of “seminal fluid” (p. 137) and the “sexual energy of women” (p. 138) can profoundly deplete the

vitality and stamina required for Yogic transformation. He stated, “sexual energy that is preserved gets transformed into subtle energy called *ojas*...it tones the entire personality, builds the nerves, improves brain power, and calms the mind...and *ojas* when stored creates *tejas*. *Tejas* is the aura or glow.” (p. 140)

Satchidananda warned that sexual indulgence can become insatiable, as the thoughtless gratification of sexual desire only perpetuates more desire. Instead of abstinence, Satchidananda recommended moderation, saying, “Are people inferior to apples? Should they allow everyone to come and take a bite before buying? ...if you want to offer yourself to someone, do it purely, chastely. You are offering something sacred and holy” (p. 140). Satchidananda also explained the four stages of life articulated in Yogic scripture: *brahmacharya*, *grihastha*, *vanaprastha* and *sannyasa*. He stated:

Until one finishes his or her education, this person is a *brahmachari*, strictly celibate. With this saved energy, he or she can grasp things well. The brain power is more dynamic. In high schools and colleges now, most students learn sex and nothing else. But instead, finish your studies and then go into partnership with another person. This is the *grihastha* stage. Bring your knowledge and strength together. You should not come together because of beauty because how long will that last? ...The real beauty is inside. In your character and noble ideas, your aim in life...the *grihastha* stage is followed by *vanaprastha*, where husband and wife has finished worldly responsibilities and they become totally involved in spiritual pursuits. They take pilgrimages or live in an ashram. Then, at a certain point, they take *sannyasa* and drop off all worldly ties completely. They are no longer husband and wife. In certain cases, if an individual has that much

discrimination, he or she may take *sannyasa* directly after the *brahmacharya* or *grihastha* stage. (pp. 138–139)

Satchidananda explained that each person should exercise discipline with regard to sexual expression, and live in accordance with whatever phase of life she is in.

Sûtra 2.32 identifies the following five observances that comprise *niyama*: *soucha*, *santosha*, *tapas* (austerity), *svadhyaya*, and *isvara pranidhanani*. What follows is a brief discussion of each observance, its significance, moral implications, and link to subthemes.

The first observance is purity, or *soucha*. Sûtra 2.40 states, “By purification arises disgust for one’s own body and for contact with other bodies” (p. 142). Satchidananda clarified that to observe purity is to first recognize that the body is inescapably impure. He said:

Every minute there are secretions. Impurities are eliminated every second. The breath pours out carbon dioxide gas. The skin discharges perspiration. If we really think about it, it seems to be a very dirty place in which we live, no matter how much perfume we put on, it only hides the dirt...when we realize this, we develop an indifference toward the body, not that we neglect it, but we no longer adore it. (p. XX)

Satchidananda described how being established in *soucha*, one recognizes the body as in a state of constant filth and decay, and this clear vision eliminates the desire for sense gratification through physical contact. Through this loss of desire, attention and energy can be redirected, *ojas* is converted into *tejas*, and the body becomes filled with light and *amritam* (nectar).

Satchidananda explained that at this point the *yogi* essentially ceases to emit toxins, secrete waste, or decay, and their form is converted into a Yogic body. Sûtra 2.41 goes on to explain that one established in *saucha* gains “cheerfulness of mind, one-pointedness, mastery over the senses, and fitness for self-realization” (p. 145).

The second *niyama* is contentment, or *santoshā*. Sūtra 2.42 states, “By contentment, supreme joy is gained” (p. 146). Satchidananda’s commentary on this observance is brief, where he described contentment as being at ease with one’s internal and external conditions, neither seeking to improve nor attempting to retain any aspect of one’s state or circumstances.

Tapas, or austerity, is the third *niyama*. *Tapas* has a direct relationship to the subtheme with regard to the value placed on suffering. Satchidananda described Yoga as akin to an obstacle course as opposed to a marathon. He highlighted that the obstacles expressed are unique to each person, karmic, and designed to illicit our full potential through the cultivation of qualities, skills, or attitudes that were previously deficient. In order to correct these deficits Yogic theory urges the practitioner to move toward discomfort and uncertainty rather than away. This is hinged on the philosophical precept that to make room for birth we must welcome death.

Yogic philosophy asserts that just as purity is requisite for contentment, austerity is requisite for purity. Sūtra 2.43 states, “By austerity, impurities of body and senses are destroyed and occult powers gained” (p. 146). Satchidananda compared *tapas* to the process dirty rags go through when laundered, that they need to be boiled, soaped, beaten, rinsed, and squeezed to remove dirt. He noted the tendency to see themselves as victims of other’s slights or the day to day misfortunes of life and suggested that these very experiences should be understood as the impetus for personal growth. He mentioned the hundreds of daily opportunities to practice *tapas*, saying, “If flowery words make us happy and insults upset us, we know our minds are not yet strong” (p. 147). He urged readers to welcome and accept everything we encounter as we would receive the guidance of a respected teacher.

The translation of the fourth *niyama*, *svadhyaya*, points to the import of scriptural study, however, Satchidananda offered the following definition, “study that concerns the true

Self...studying with the heart” (p. 81). In the same passage, he explained that seekers should be careful to “not merely analyzing emotions as mind as psychologists and psychiatrists do” (p. 81). His commentary supported the non-denominational study of scripture and suggested meditation is itself a form of *svadhyaya*. He even warned that the intellect can become an obstacle, and that words have weight only when they follow on the heels of experience. He urged readers to, “limit your reading and put into practice what you read” (p. 82).

The last *niyama*, *isvara pranidhanani*, is translated as surrender. Satchidananda speaks at length about the import of surrendering the fruits of one’s practice, making practice an act of service. Sûtra 2.45 states, “By total surrender to god, *samadhi* is gained” (p. 149). However, Satchidananda states that one can devote oneself a chosen deity, or to humanity as a manifestation or expression of the divine. Surrender was previously addressed in another subtheme, and what follows is a brief discussion of a few of the overarching values communicated in YS about the Yoga tradition.

The *yamas* and *niyamas* rotate around the value of discipline. The emphasis on self-discipline is related to several previous subthemes; as you think, so you become, and the subtheme on how the devotion to justice, harmony, and balance honors the unified nature of existence. While the discussion of this subtheme explains how thoughts inspire action, repetitive acts form habits and the cumulative effect of habits shape character; the exercise of self-discipline was not apparently intended for the sole purpose of personal refinement. Throughout his commentary Satchidananda highlights how actions motivated by personal gain cause harm, while selfless action creates harmony. To echo another subtheme, he says, “That is why Yoga is based on self-reformation, self-control, and self-adjustment” (p. 9), because no one exists in a vacuum. This could be articulated as another subtheme: We are all responsible for the impact of

our actions on the whole, and the exercise of self-discipline to minimize harm and maximize harmony.

Within the Yogic authority on moral vision, this subtheme emerged: All knowledge obtained via the mind is limited and conditional, and knowing beyond (or without) mind is closer to experience than intellectual understanding. This highlights the value of experience over knowledge. This is reflected in the importance given to practice as subjective verification. Furthermore, Satchidananda frequently made comments such as, “you cannot get beyond the mind with the mind” (p. 40), warned against the danger of intellectual certainty, and advocated for the adoption of a beginner’s attitude and the humility it engenders.

Satchidananda extends the limits of mind to all human knowledge and endeavors, including religion. Throughout all four books he differentiates between transcendent experience and religious doctrine, putting emphasis on the former. In the first book he stated:

...we have to understand the difference between the basic truth and the presentation. Truth can be presented only through some form or vehicle...when presented to you through words and forms and modes, it may appear in different ways to suit the individual or trend of the age. (p. xx)

In his commentary on sūtra 2.19, he stated:

The [hindu] gods are just human beings who have evolved a little further and learned to control nature and, by that control, have earned the enjoyment of certain pleasures in the heavens. But after that, they come back [incarnate]...until they burn all the seeds of desire and become completely liberated by knowing themselves. (p. 37)

Satchidananda's tendency to prioritize experience is reflected in his non-denominational approach to spiritual practice, and his liberal attitude towards religious symbolism. In his commentary on sūtra 2.27, he explained:

Symbols should be used to help you transcend them...once we reach our destination, we can throw it off and go away. There should be no sentimentality here. Make proper use of spiritual aids, but do not hesitate to leave them and go further. (p. 123)

Satchidananda's understanding of religion or spirituality as only the "skeletal structure that upholds the outside of the building" (p. 12), where experience is the foundation or bedrock, implies that to dismiss the tradition of Yoga as religious is to misunderstand it completely. The importance placed on experience concludes this discussion of Yoga as a tradition, and leads naturally into a discussion of Yoga as a phenomenon.

Domains of Yogic Authority within the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. While Ayurveda is often discussed as separate from Yoga, they share a theoretical and philosophical foundation of understanding, history of discourse, and each borrow from and lend to each other in complex ways (Frawley, 1999). While Yogic theory conceives of a unified bodymind, where the strict division between psychology and medicine is absent, other schools of Yoga place emphasis on different aspects of the Yoga tradition. The Vedic influence on YS is shown in its emphasis on abstract facets of Yoga's theory, philosophy, and psychology over its concrete practices, nuanced physiology, or medicine. Conversely, the Tantric influence on HYP, with its focus on purification and embodied practice refers more frequently to principles, concepts, and techniques that Yoga shares with Ayurveda. This is evident in the organization of the text itself, which is separated into the four following chapters: *asana*, *shatkarma* and *pranayama*, *mudra* and *bandha*, and *samadhi*. The tradition of Yoga consists of a complex network of interrelated

concepts, and thus it does not fit neatly into discrete categories. However, for the purpose of clarity, quotes are grouped under the same facets of the tradition identified in YS: (a) theory, philosophy, and psychology; (b) practical application; (c) science; (d) cosmology, and (e) moral vision. In the process of organizing quotes, subthemes emerged.

Theory, philosophy, and psychology. Similar to YS, the overlap in supporting passages regarding the theory, philosophy, and psychology of Yoga made it both difficult and redundant to discuss one facet without the others. Philosophical hermeneutics also understands psychology as an ongoing moral, theoretical, and philosophical discourse about the nature of human being, the psyche, illness, and health. Similarly, the tradition of Yoga prescribes a way of being in the world that addresses each facet of human experience and what it means to live a good life. For example, at the close of the introduction, Muktibodhananda stated:

Just to improve the physical health is not enough. The mental health must also improve, the nature must change, the personality must change, the psychological and psychic framework also has to change. You should not merely feel freedom from disease, but freedom from bondage, and from the vagaries of the mind. (p. 20)

This quote overtly suggests Yoga has its own theory, philosophy and psychology, further adding to the ample evidence supporting this shared subtheme: Yogic psychology includes a holistic, layered, and multifaceted theory of bodymind and a nuanced philosophy regarding the nature of the Self and human potential.

From a Tantric perspective, the concept of mind in Yogic psychology is layered and complex. Muktibodhananda said, “Mind is said to be composed of 24 elements: five jnanendriya, five karmendriya, five tanmatras, five tattwas and antah karana (i.e. chitta, buddhi, ahamkara and manas)” (p. 474). Muktibodhananda did not delve into all 24 elements, and only

briefly discusses the components of the individual mind or *antah karana*. She defined *manas* as thought and counter thought, *buddhi* as the discerning mind, *ahamkara* as the ego, or sense of identity, and *chitta* as both individual consciousness and memory. However, Muktibodhananda also references a fifth aspect of mind, *prana shakti*, the vital life force. She defined *prana* as the vital energy that pervades and sustains the entire cosmos, and *prana shakti* as the force, power, or action that directs *prana*.

Muktibodhananda defined *shakti* as a “creative force or vehicle of consciousness” (p. 628). Using *prana shakti* as an example, the implication is that *prana* by itself exists, but *prana shakti* is *prana* in action. To further clarify, her commentary on verses 4.21–4.25 gave the example of *chitta shakti*, explaining that *chitta* is the storehouse or memory of all *samskaras*, and that our will or desire activates *shakti* to bridge *chitta* with the sense organs, making sensory experiences possible. Muktibodhananda went on to define *chitta shakti* as that force of will or desire, and *kriya shakti* as the force of action. *Shakti* is given a great deal of attention in the commentary on HYP as a mechanism of manifestation, a force which enlivens or brings into being whatever it comes in contact with.

While most of the theoretical and philosophical foundations described in HYP are shared with that of YS, HYP goes further than YS to explain the mechanisms and processes that support Yogic theory and philosophy. In particular, Muktibodhananda’s commentary is more explicit about the bodymind, elucidating details regarding the layers or sheathes of the body, the process of moving from gross to subtle awareness, and concrete instructions for the methods and practices designed to induce incremental stages of psychological awakening. In general, the verses of HYP focus on describing practices and their purpose and warn that overindulgence in thinking about theory, philosophy, or morality can ensnare the mind. While this philosophical

stance is discussed more fully in the first subtheme unique to HYP, it mirrors this shared subtheme: All knowledge obtained via the mind is limited and conditional, and knowing beyond (or without) mind is closer to experience than intellectual understanding. This is further reflected in the plethora of verses and commentary in HYP that elevate the value of firsthand experience by offering guidelines for practices that teach the aspirant to consciously direct the flow of energy.

Over the course of 5,000 years the tradition of Yoga developed a nuanced and extensive theory of bodymind far more complex and integrative than any theory of mind conceived by psychologists in the U.S. In fact, this theory of bodymind stands in stark contrast with the compartmentalization of psychology and medicine in the U.S. In her commentary on verse 4.42, Muktibodhananda explained that each person has three bodies: (a) material body: *sthula sharira*; (b) subtle/astral body: *sukshma sharira*; and (c) causal/etheric body: *karana sharira*. She noted that these three bodies are further subdivided into ten bodies, or sheathes, like rings of an onion. While she did not elaborate on each of the ten sheathes, she discussed two of the three main bodies, and mentioned that different types of practices were designed to affect these different sheathes. For example, Muktibodhananda gives extensive commentary for the numerous verses addressing the impact of diet and lifestyle on the *sthula sharira*. The specifics of these recommendations are discussed in more depth in the subsequent section on practical application. In her commentary on verse 2.5, Muktibodhananda explained the theory surrounding *nadis* (energy pathways) and *chakras*. She described the *chakras* as central convergence point for the *nadis* and a fundamental component of the *sukshma sharira*. She clarified that while these pathways and centers do not have a tangible physical location like nerves or organs, they can be felt, they convey a direction or flow and act as channels, hubs and relay stations for *prana*.

There are seven primary *chakras* felt along the length of the spine. While ancient scripture has identified over 72,000 *nadis* in the body (Frawley, 2009), she described the three central *nadi* to Hatha Yoga as *ida*, *pingala*, and *sushumna*. She articulated the relationship between *vritti*, *samskaras*, *vasana*, and *karma* and noted that these facets of *chitta* are stored in the *chakras* within *sukshma sharira*. She explained what the *chakras* govern, how they become obstructed or depleted, and how this leads to mental and physiological imbalance. Muktibodhananda further explained how the first step to healing the bodymind through Hatha Yoga is purifying and activating the *chakras*. Most of HYP addresses the purification of subtle or astral body: *sukshma sharira* as the link between the material body, *sthula sharira*, and the causal or etheric body, *karana sharira*.

The *pranic* body is a fundamental component of the *sukshma sharira*. In her commentary on verse 2.3, Muktibodhananda shares a diagram depicting the directional flow of *prana* within the *pranic body*. This image depicts the five *vayu*, or the different directions *prana* flows in the energy body and the physical and psychological functions governed by each. Physically, *prana vayu* moves upward and governs absorption, *samana vayu* circulates in the abdomen and governs assimilation, *apana vayu* moves downwards and governs digestion and elimination, *udana vayu* radiates up and out and controls movement in the arms, throat, and face, and *vyana vayu* permeates the entire *pranic* body and governs circulation. In further commentary on verse 2.3, Muktibodhananda touched on the psychological aspects of the *vayu*. She explained that *prana vayu* activates the upper chakras governing *chitta* and is linked to *ida nadi*. She noted that *apana vayu* activates the lower chakras governing our animal instincts or lower drives and is linked to *prana* and *pingala*. Lastly she explained that *udana vayu* governs the process of awakening, and is linked to *kundalini* and *sushumna*. She highlighted that

numerous practices were designed to change the directional flow of the *vayu* at will. In particular, many practices aim to make *prana vayu* travel down and *apana vayu* travel up so they converge in *samana vayu*, bridging our lower animal instincts with higher moral virtues, fostering perseverance, discernment, and discipline.

Muktibodhananda further discusses the *pranic* body in her commentary verse 2.4, referencing Yogic theory that all disease, whether physical or psychological, is due to irregularities or impediments to the flow of *prana*. Muktibodhananda explained that these irregularities and impediments are the result of accumulated waste or residue from sensuous living. She stated, “The *pranic* body is the intermediate link between the physical body and the mind. Therefore, it can be approached through either side. It is, however, easier to control and purify the *pranic* body through the physical body” (pp. 158-159). This mirrors another subtheme HYP shares with YS: Mind, body, and nature (the whole of existence) cannot be understood or effectively treated as separate. The philosophy of a unified bodymind is evident in the relationships such as linking the left nostril to the left side body, one’s mood, the moon, mind or *chitta*, *ida nadi*, and the dimension of time. Similarly, the right nostril is linked to the right side of the body, one’s inner light, the sun, *prana*, *pingala nadi*, and the dimension of space. Tantric Yoga has developed extensive literature and practices surrounding the philosophy of a unified bodymind. Muktibodhananda references this in her commentary on verse 1.49, when she said,

...forty-nine essential faculties or powers of mind. They are also represented by the forty-nine letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, and each part of the body is associated with a particular letter. Every part of the body has a corresponding center of the brain and its own *bija* mantra located in the psychic body and mind. (p. 124)

Whether Tantric or Vedantic, Yogic theory and philosophy conceives of everything in existence as interrelated and collectively bound.

In the introduction, Muktibodhananda outlined the purpose of the Hatha Yoga tradition as transformation, awakening, or realization of human potential. She explained that Ha is the *bija mantra* (sacred seed syllable) for *prana* (vital energy), and tha is the *bija mantra* for *chitta*, and thus Ha-tha Yoga is the union of *prana* and *chitta*. Muktibodhananda described the three *nadi* central to Hatha Yoga: *ida*, *pingala*, and *sushumna*, where *prana* flows through the *pingala nadi*, *chitta* flows through the *ida nadi*, and *kundalini shakti* (manifest consciousness) flows through *sushumna nadi*. Muktibodhananda explained that when *pingala* and *ida* are made to unite within *sushumna* at the *ajna chakra* (third eye, or energy center around the midbrain), this is considered the realization of Hatha Yoga. This union awakens *kundalini shakti* lying dormant in *mooladhara chakra* (root, or energy center at the base of the spine). Once awakened, specific practices remove blocks or inspire *kundalini shakti* to ascend via *sushumna nadi* (the central energy channel along the spine) until she reaches the *sahasrara chakra* (crown, or energy center at the top of the skull). Muktibodhananda said:

When Kundalini is established in sahasrara chakra, that is called Yoga, not Hatha Yoga.

This is the difference between Yoga and Hatha Yoga. Yoga means union of Shiva (unmanifest consciousness) and Shakti (manifest consciousness)...ultimate union.

Therefore, the ultimate object of Hatha Yoga is to experience Yoga. (p. 13)

This passage again points to the dual definition of Yoga as a tradition, in this case Hatha Yoga, and as a phenomenological state of being or Yoga.

The process by which manifest consciousness is coaxed to ascend through each *chakra* along *sushumna*, merge with unified consciousness, and then from an undifferentiated state

return to a differentiated state, is the embodiment or lived expression of Yoga described in HYP. In her commentary on 4.16, Muktibodhananda stated:

Kundalini must return back down to mooladhara chakra under the guidance of ajna, otherwise the spirit or atma will leave the body for good. When kundalini returns the Yogi once again assumes his life in the mundane world, but with an altered or elevated state of consciousness. (pp. 489–490)

This notion of ascension and descension is evidence of the Tantric influence on HYP, and is reflective of the subtheme HYP shares with YS: To remain steadfast in the realization of self as an embodiment of unified consciousness is the aim of the tradition. Yogic psychology in HYP explains that this physiological process of ascending and descending signals a corresponding process of psychological awakening. On this she wrote:

When kundalini shakti reaches sahasrara chakra, then the last traces of karma, vasana, and ego are destroyed. As the kundalini moves up sushumna, the various samskaras stored in each of the chakras are pulled forth into manifestation. These samskaras are expressed through the ego. The process of samadhi is the involution of shakti into pure consciousness. It is the process of eliminating the base supports of the individual mind. (p. 482)

In her commentary on verse 1.10, Muktibodhananda said, “In order to experience higher or purer states of existence and still maintain the bodymind in the gross realm so that the consciousness can return, we have to be prepared” (p. 36). Muktibodhananda puts emphasis on the need to be prepared, and argued that transformation requires increased vitality, that the vibratory frequency of the bodymind must be elevated through purification and practice, that it must be resilient enough to tolerate the intensity and discomfort experienced at different stages

of awakening. Hatha Yoga begins with *asana* to clear basic toxicity; then utilizes *shatkarma* to purify and prepare the *pranic* body for *pranayama*; then, once a practitioner has achieved their full capacity to inhale, exhale, and retain the breath by practicing *pranayama*, they are ready for subtler practice using the *bandhas* and *mudras* to draw in, lock, and consciously direct the flow of *prana* as a catalyst for transformation. Muktibodhananda emphasized the need for increased vitality to spark this transformation when she wrote:

...most people only operate on a very low current of energy and thus only utilize a very small portion of their brains capacity. To awaken the dormant centers of the brain the energy level has to be increased, and to increase prana the positive and negative energies have to be brought together. When they unite and explosion occurs, releasing a greater quantum of energy...the released energy travels through sushumna to the higher brain centers. This energy is called Kundalini. (p. 123)

All the *shatkarma*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *bandhas*, and *mudras* are aimed at preparing the bodymind to tolerate the process of awakening.

Hatha Yoga as described in HYP does not make a distinction between physical transformation and psychological awakening, they are inextricable and happen simultaneously. This philosophical stance is evident in Muktibodhananda's commentary on verse 3.106–3.107.

She said:

In the psychophysiology of Yoga, three knots (*granthis*) are encountered in the awakening of kundalini...These are three locations where consciousness and energy are tightly knotted or intertwined, and must be unraveled if the reality of higher consciousness is to be experienced. (p. 419)

Even the term “psychophysiology of Yoga” implies the union of psychology and physiology

within the tradition of Yoga.

In describing the final stages of awakening, Muktibodhananda refers back to the eight limbs and explains that all the practices in Hatha Yoga are a form of *pratyahara*. She stated:

The senses usually run toward objects: eyes after form, ears after sound, nose after smell.

This is how the senses run after their respective sense objects. The knowledge of the sense object is then transferred to the mind, and thus stimulation is constantly sent to different centers of the brain, thereby disturbing the mind. As a result the mind is agitated, active, and dynamic all the time. If you have to silence the mind, you must delink the mind from senses. This delinking process is called *pratyahara*. (p. 450)

She explained that to practice *dharana*, or to fix one's awareness on a single object or idea and sustain that unwavering concentration, the senses must not divert attention away, and thus the full realization of *pratyahara* is required. In her commentary of 3.124 Muktibodhananda stated, "To be able to hold an idea for a period of time, it is necessary to have withdrawn completely...then *dhyana*, total awareness, occurs" (p. 450). Again, the realization of *dharana* spontaneously gives rise to *dyana*. *Dyana* is complete absorption, where only the object of meditation remains. Achieving *dyana* initiates the progressive stages of *samadhi* as described in YS. Interestingly, while the phenomenological experience of these phases are well described, the implication is that *dharana*, *dyana*, and the progressive phases of *samadhi* do not need to be elicited with the mind as suggested in YS, but unfold naturally using practices that work to circumvent the mind. The philosophical distinction between enlisting the mind to overcome the mind in YS and circumventing the mind to overcome the mind in HYP is further explained in the discussion of the first subtheme unique to HYP. The focus on layered phenomenological experience of *nada* (subtle vibration created by union of *shiva* and *shakti*) and *laya* (spontaneous

dissolution or absorption of the mind) in the final chapter again points to the way HYP encourages the practitioner to surrender thinking, giving oneself over to the presence of experience. The philosophy surrounding desire in the tradition of Yoga as described in HYP stands out against the warnings issued by Satchidananda in YS. Frequently in her commentary Muktibodhananda articulates that desire is not necessarily bad, and that if repressed or removed too quickly desires unconsciously influence behavior, manifest in disease, or sap the will to live. She clearly states that desires, "...should not be suppressed under any circumstance" (p. 515). Here the influence of Tantra can be seen in the attitude toward desire, where *vasanas* are not simply viewed as obstacles as described in YS, but as necessary during certain stages in the process of awakening. She explained that all desire can be classified as one of four types: (a) *Dharma*, the desire for purpose and ethical life, (b) *Artha*, the desire for wealth, (c) *Kaama*, the desire for sense gratification, and (d) *Moksha*, the desire for liberation. In her commentary on verse 4.32 she described how desires arise in a sequential way and are, "necessary for evolution." (p. 515)

Muktibodhananda did not suggest practitioners indulge their desires, but rather, acknowledged that the cumulative experience of suffering that results from attachment and aversion naturally shifts the object of desire from worldly pursuits to psychological awakening. She delved further into this progression when she said:

It is only in the sattvic person, one who has attained a sattvic mind that there will be fewer or no *vasanas*. However, when one is rajasic or tamasic in evolution, one must have *vasanas*. If man is lazy (tamasic), and he does not have desires, he will become yet more lazy, but if he has desires, he is goaded to work. *Vasanas* compel him to become active. So in the tamasic state, *vasanas* should be stimulated; In the rajasic or dynamic

state, they should be balanced; and in the *sattwic* state or balanced state, they should be eliminated gradually. (p. 515)

Here Muktibodhananda referenced the theoretical concept of the *gunas* to clarify how desires support the practitioner at different stages of their psychological development. As noted in YS, the *gunas* are states or attributes that qualify the elements, material existence, and all actions or interactions. The three *gunas* are *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattwa*. *Tamas* is linked with the earth element, it is described as cold, dark, and stagnant, and it is associated with denial, dissociation, and depression. *Rajas* is linked to the fire element, it is described as hot, rapid, pressured, and moving, and it is associated with desire, passion, and aggression. *Sattwa* is linked with the element of air, it is described as light, clear, calm, and balanced, and it is associated with purity, contentment, and discipline. The progression of psychological development elucidated by Muktibodhananda becomes meaningful in this light, why a *tamasic* person would need desires to combat stagnation, why a *rajasic* person would need to temper their desires, directing them towards spiritual ends, and why achieving *sattwic* qualities signals readiness for the gradual elimination of desires.

The philosophical discussion surrounding the relationship between attachment, aversion, and suffering, and the natural progression of desire from selfish to selfless in its aim points to the another subtheme shared by HYP and YS: Ignorance is the root of suffering, where our identification with the bodymind causes us to chase after pleasure and avoid pain; and, Suffering itself has value and welcoming suffering is beneficial. The reference to the *gunas* in HYP places emphasis on ignorance, or ego, as not simply a lack of information, but as a physiological state associated with toxicity and imbalance. For example, spicy or pungent foods can create too much heat in the body, causing *rajasic* imbalance that results in aggression or over identification

with the outcome of practice and thus the reification of ego. In this case, wrongfully identifying with the bodymind cannot simply be corrected by changing one's mind, or rather, changing one's mind is dependent on changing one's body, environment, and lifestyle.

In her commentary on verse 1.11, Muktibodhananda stated, "If you want to experience cosmic consciousness, the ego or *ahamkara* is the greatest barrier" (p. 39). Many verses that reference the ego in HYP are discussed in the context of surrender. In referencing the intense sense experience of awakening *kundalini shakti* at the root *chakra*, Muktibodhananda states, "out of fear the aspirant may be looking for some way out of the encounter" (p. 419), and discusses that the aspirant must accept ego death to experience awakening. While her commentary on verse 1.16 (pp. ii-iii) addresses how *yama* and *niyama* should be effortless, spontaneous, and the natural result of practice, she also repeatedly stressed the need to release attachment to worldly desires, sense gratification, and individual gain. Muktibodhananda repeatedly conveys that the mind is not static or fixed, but rather it is shaped by what we do with it. Given this, the power of being intentional about how we direct our attention wherever possible can have a profound impact. This is reflective of both a fundamental principle in Yoga and constitutes another shared subtheme: As you think, so you become. Verse 1.66 states, "Neither by wearing the garb of the siddha, nor by talking about it is perfection attained" (p. 143), addressing the concept that success comes from practice not presentation, pointing to the desire for recognition and admiration. This is one of the many times in this text when both the verse and the commentary reference the concept that no merit is gained by sharing one's spiritual experiences, achievements, or abilities with others.

Many verses highlight this subtheme shared with YS: Without an attitude of surrender, practice will fail to yield fruit, or the fruits harvested will be squandered on the ego. While

surrendering the ego is a requisite component of the Yoga tradition as described in both HYP and YS, Muktibodhananda describes the ego in a nuanced way, articulating the apparent conflict between the “lower instinctive subconscious” and the “discriminative higher mind” (p. 487) and that ultimately this conflict drives evolution and results in union. What follows is a discussion of the application of this theory through practices that elicit Yoga as a phenomenological state of being. These practices can be understood as interventions in Yogic psychology, designed to clear obstructions, purify the bodymind, and facilitate awakening.

Practical application. The vast majority of verses in HYP reference specific practices, and the subsequent commentary provides methodical and detailed instruction. This suggests the focus of Hatha Yoga is practice designed to purify the bodymind. Muktibodhananda stated, “in order to purify the mind, it is necessary for the body as a whole to undergo a process of absolute purification. Hatha Yoga is also known as the science of purification” (p. 6). The order of topics covered in the four chapters of HYP conveys the ideal sequence of practice; where chapter one discusses *asana*; chapter two reviews *shatkarma* and *pranayama*; chapter three examines *bandhas* and *mudras*; and chapter four explains the practices that induce the incremental stages of *samadhi*.

The first nine verses of chapter one pay homage to the lineage of teachers within the Hatha Yoga tradition. In her commentary on verses 1.5–1.9, Muktibodhananda provided a foundation of terminology by introducing the Sanskrit words *sadhana* (yogic practice), *sadhaka* (the practitioner), *sadhya* (the object of practice), and *siddhis*. This paved the way for her to describe the lineage of Hatha Yoga teachers as *mahasiddhas*, or those who have achieved all eight principle *siddhis*: (a) *Anima* (the ability to become small as an atom), (b) *Laghima* (the ability to become weightless), (c) *Mahima* (the ability to become as large as the universe), (d)

Garima (the ability to become heavy), (e) *Prapti* (the ability to reach any place), (f) *Prakamya* (the ability to stay under water and to maintain body and youth), (g) *Vashitva* (control over all objects, organic and inorganic), and (h) *Ishatva* (the capacity to create and destroy at will).

Muktibodhananda suggested that the practice of Hatha Yoga not only allows one to realize the full potential of the human mind, but that in doing so one is no longer bound by the laws of physics. She explained that omnipresence and omnipotence are a phenomenological reality when one is wholly awake. This points back to a subtheme identified earlier: To remain steadfast in the realization of self as an embodiment of unified consciousness is the aim of the tradition. While initially this claim sounds abstract or perhaps outlandish, Yogic theory suggests that in achieving union with cosmic consciousness, there is nothing one would not know, nothing separate, other, or out of reach.

HYP theme one. Before discussing the *asanas*, verses 1.10–1.16 discuss the ideal conditions for practice with regard to the environment as well as the attitude, attributes, and lifestyle of the practitioner. This initiates a conceptual thread that runs throughout the text, and represents an additional subtheme predominantly expressed in HYP: the practice of Yoga is not universal but particular, sensitive to the era, environment, stage of life, time of day, and the *sadhaka*'s constitution, diet, and lifestyle. The ideal environment for practice is first introduced in verses 1.12–1.13 and is described as modest, safe from elements, solitary, simple, practical, dark, distractionless, clean, and peaceful. *Mitahara*, or the ideal diet prescribed, is sweet, agreeable food that leaves one-fourth of the stomach empty, and is eaten as an offering rather than to please the senses. Functional assimilation and absorption is emphasized over quantity, and it is noted that fasting, pungent foods, and alcohol (as it irrevocably destroys brain cells) are contraindicated for Yogic practice.

Ayurvedic concepts appear most often in reference to ideal conditions for, as well as the selection and sequence of practices. For example, a *sadhaka's dosha* (constitution) is an Ayurvedic concept where each person uniquely embodies one or a combination of two or three primary *doshas* (*vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*). The *doshas* are correlated with the *gunas*; *tamas* with *kapha*, *rajas* with *pitta*, and *sattwa* with *vata*. The Yogic diet recommended in HYP is said to ideally compliment one's *dosha*, include the right balance of six *rasas* (flavors or tastes: sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent), and nourish the seven *dhatu*s (skin, flesh, blood, bones, marrow, fat, and semen/ova). Again, both the *rasas* and *dhatu*s are Ayurvedic concepts. In general there is an emphasis on the preservation of *prana*, where activities that waste *prana* or cause it to dissipate are contraindicated. The primary contraindicated activities mentioned in chapter one include: overeating, eating the wrong foods for one's constitution, consumption of toxins, overexertion, or excessive talking. Similarly, certain attitudes or attributes of the *sadhaka* are presented as supportive while others create barriers or prevent realizing the benefits of *sadhana*. Lust, greed, anger, fear, ignorance, and envy are presented as "enemies" (p. 321), while enthusiasm, perseverance, discrimination, unshakable faith, courage, and avoiding common people are described as the "qualities that bring success" (p. 54).

Additionally, HYP includes a rich discussion on the nuances of ideal timing. For example, in her commentary on verse 1.16 Muktibodhananda said, "In hatha Yoga the whole system has been designed for people in the kali yuga" (p. 56). The term *yuga* is translated as era or epoch, and the *kali yuga* is one of four *yugas* that constitute how time is measured in Yogic cosmology. Another example of the individualized nature of practice is provided in Muktibodhananda's commentary on verse 2.11, when she explained that ideally *sadhana* is done early in the morning, an hour and a half before sunrise, after bathing, cleansing, and eliminating,

but before eating. If in the evening, Muktibodhananda's commentary suggests practice should be done during the period while the sun is setting, called *sandhya ranaya*. This is further discussed in the commentary for verse 3.30-3.31, where it is suggested that certain *mudras* be practiced between or during specific *yamas*. Muktibodhananda stated:

According to the Yoga shastras, the twenty-four hour period of a day is divided into sixteen parts, each of ninety minutes called ghariya; or eight periods of three hours called yama. In each period the flow of energy throughout the body varies and different organs function more actively. Of course as the brain hemispheres alternate their functioning every sixty to ninety minutes, one's mode of thinking also changes. Yogi Swatmarama specifies that maha mudra, maha bandha, and maha vedha mudra should be practiced during each three hour period. (p. 308)

This gives a window into the nuanced analysis of time in Yoga, and how a practitioner, given their constitutional strengths and weaknesses, might benefit from practice during particular times of day. In her commentary on verse 3.119 Muktibodhananda stated, "regular practice at the appropriate time creates harmony in the body/mind and likewise, irregular practice at the wrong time creates imbalance" (p. 439). Clearly the tradition of Yoga includes an in-depth analysis of and relationship to time.

Verse 1.17 states that beginning with the practice of *asana* creates a steady, light, flexible, and diseaseless bodymind. In her commentary on this verse, Muktibodhananda explained:

Asana is a specific position which opens the energy channels and psychic [centres].

Hatha Yoga is a process through which purification and control of the body take place by

restructuring the pranic flows. The hatha yogis also found that by developing control of the body through asana, the mind is controlled. (p. 67)

The first chapter of HYP gives detailed descriptions of the physiological and psychological impact of selected *asanas*. In her commentary on verse 1.18 Muktibodhananda noted that there are as many *asanas* as there are features of nature, sentient beings, and phenomenological states, but that only 33 *asanas* are mentioned across all source literature in the Yoga tradition. She suggested that only those *asanas* most essential for developing higher wisdom have been featured in Yogic literature. In the first chapter of HYP, the following *asanas* are discussed: *Swastikasana* (auspicious pose), *Gomukhasana* (cow-face pose), *Veerasana* (hero's pose), *Koormasana* (tortoise pose), *Kukktasana* (cockrell pose), *Uttankoormasana* (stretching tortoise pose), *Dhanurasana* (bow pose), *Matsyendrasana* (spinal twist pose), *Paschimottanasana* (back stretching pose), *mayurasana* (peacock pose), *Shavasana* (corpse pose), *Siddhasana* (accomplished pose), *Padmasana* (lotus pose), *Simhasana* (lion pose), and *Bhadrasana* (gracious pose).

The Sanskrit verses of HYP give only general instruction and often vaguely reference the significance, purpose, or impact of selected *asanas* using myth and metaphor. Conversely, Muktibodhananda's commentary includes specific instruction, physiological cues, and explains the import, impact, and role of each *asana* in the process of realization or awakening. While the specifics may vary slightly, the overall purpose of *asana* is the same: to purify the bodymind by clearing the *nadis* and activating the *chakras*. Muktibodhananda offers extensive commentary on the specific impact, benefit, or role each *asana* plays in the process of awakening. While a complete catalogue of these benefits is beyond the scope of this work, her commentary suggests that *asana* practice can tone the muscles and nervous system, shed excess fat and flush retained

water, detox and nourish the organ systems, regulate the adrenal glands and hormonal secretions, improve digestion, facilitate smooth and functional integration of heart rate, respiration, and brain wave patterns, align the spinal column, heal physical and mental disorders, improve willpower, increase contentment and compassion, foster an attitude of surrender and non-attachment, purify the *nadis* and *chakras* so *prana* can flow unobstructed throughout the body, contain, re-absorb, or direct the flow of “nectar” (p. XX) from the higher brain centers, prepare the body for long periods of meditation, and facilitate both the flow of *prana* along the three central *nadis* (*ida*, *pingala*, and *sushumna*) to awaken *kundalini*. This list provides a glimpse into the healing potential of *asana* as it was practiced traditionally as far beyond that of simple calisthenics.

Shaktikarma is comprised of six *kriyas* (practices) designed for deep internal cleansing of the whole bodymind. These *kriyas* are: *dhauti*, *basti*, *neti*, *trataka*, *kapalabhati*, and *nauli*. This internal cleansing is another way to fortify the bodymind, readying it for transformation.

Muktibodhananda stated:

The system of hatha Yoga was designed to transform the gross elements of the body so they can receive and transmit a much subtler and more powerful energy. If the body is not prepared for this higher form of energy, it would be like running 200 volts of electricity into a machine which only has the capacity to utilize six... Traditionally, hatha Yoga consisted of only six *kriyas* known as *shatkarmas*... through these practices the consciousness can be raised without having to come into a direct confrontation with the mind. (p. 26)

In her commentary on verse 2.36, Muktibodhananda explained that via the practice of *shatkarma*, *pranayama* can be practiced effortlessly and the benefit realized instantly. She

explained in her commentary on the following verse, that *pranayama* can produce the same effect, but at a much slower pace due to additional effort required, possible strain or discomfort, and mental conflict and interference.

It is notable that Hatha Yoga was traditionally comprised of only the *shatkarma*, especially considering this aspect of the tradition is widely ignored in the U.S. This may be due to the need for expert instruction sensitive to both the intensity of the *shatkarma* as well as the risks associated with poor selection or inaccurate practice. For these reasons Muktibodhananda emphasized the need for a *guru* in her commentary on verse 2.23:

The shatkarma are very powerful practices that can never be learned from books or taught by inexperienced people...The shatkarma are said to be secret practices as one must be personally instructed to do them and taught how to perform them and how often, according to individual need. For this a qualified and experienced teacher is essential.

Those who sincerely want to learn the shatkarma will have to find a guru of hatha Yoga and they will have to search well because few teachers are expert in shatkarma. (p. 188)

The majority of yoga teachers in the U.S. have had minimal training in the extensive tradition of Yoga. Even in India, only a rare few have gained expertise in these esoteric practices.

In her commentary on verse 22, Muktibodhananda briefly described the six *kriyas* of *shatkarma*. This included mention of the following four types of *dhauti*: *antar dhauti* (expelling air through the anus), *varisara dhauti* (evacuating a large quantity of water through the bowels), *vahnisara dhauti* (rapid expansion/contraction of the abdomen), and *bahiskrita dhauti* (washing the rectum in the hands). Her commentary also made note of the following two types of *basti*: *jala basti* (sucking water into the large intestine through the anus and then expelling it) and *sthala basti* (sucking air into the large intestine through the anus and then expelling it).

Muktibodhananda explained the four types of *neti*: *jala neti* (passing warm saline water through the nose), *sûtra neti* (passing soft thread through the nose), *ghrita neti* (passing ghee through the nose), and *dugdha neti* (passing milk through the nose). She also discussed the two types of *trataka*: *antar trataka* (gazing at an internal flame) and *bahir trataka* (gazing at an external flame). She further remarked on the three types of *nauli*: *dakshina nauli* (churning the stomach muscles to the right), *vama nauli* (churning the stomach muscles to the left), and *madhyama nauli* (churning the stomach muscles in the middle). Lastly, she described the three practices of *kapalabhati*: *vatkrama kapalabhati* (described as similar to *bhastrika pranayama*, or bellows breath), *vyutkrama kapalabhati* (sucking air through the nose and expelling it through the mouth), and *sheetkrama kapalabhati* (sucking water in through the nose and expelling it through the mouth).

Muktibodhananda described these practices as “the most important aspect of hatha Yoga” (p. 187) despite their current lack of use. With regard to their benefit she stated:

When the body is purified the chemical constituents are in balanced proportion and the brain waves are simultaneously influenced and altered. When the body is pure the mind becomes stable, emotional reactions to external stimuli are altered and you will respond in a more relaxed and controlled manner. Thus the *shatkarma* enable control over unruly senses. They make the *karmendriya* ‘organs of action’ keen and the *jnanendriya* ‘organs of knowledge’ more perceptive and sensitive. (p. 200)

While Muktibodhananda did not elaborate on the *karmendriya* or *jnanendriya*, she explained that the *shatkarma* have the power to purify all five *koshas* (sheathes or layers of human experience). She remarked that the *koshas* were identified in the tradition of Yoga as five ways we interpret or understand phenomenology: *Anamaya kosha* (food or physical sheath), *pranamaya kosha*

(energy or pranic sheath), *manomaya kosha* (mental sheath), *vijnanamaya kosha* (intuitive sheath), and *anandamaya kosha* (bliss sheath). She remarked that the *koshas* are interwoven, and a blockage in one affects all others, preventing smooth communication and integration. Again, while a comprehensive list of the many benefits of the *shatkarma* is beyond the scope of this project, the following quote by Muktibodhananda allows the reader to glimpse their significance, “When you practice the shatkarma you are establishing integration of your whole being, physically, emotionally, mentally, psychically and cosmically” (p. 201).

The remainder of chapter two is comprised of verses on *pranayama*. These verses and their subsequent commentary specifically addressed the ideal conditions for practice, the practices themselves, and their impact or purpose. Verse 2.71 states, “Pranayama is said to be of three types: exhalation (*rechaka*), inhalation (*pooraka*), and retention (*kumbhaka*). *Kumbhaka* is again of two types: connected (*sahita*) and unconnected (*kevala*)” (p. 268). On this verse, Muktibodhananda remarked that retention practiced via conscious effort is *sahita kumbhaka*, whereas the spontaneous cessation of breath is *kevala kumbhaka*. Furthermore, retention with the breath held in is called *antaranga kumbhaka*, whereas retention with the breath held out is called *bahiranga kumbhaka*.

The frequency, duration, and type of *pranayama* practiced is unique to each individual’s needs, and thus no recommended sequence of practices is provided in HYP. Instead, only loose guidance is offered. For example, verse 2.12 conveyed progressive bodily cues that signal the appropriate time to begin the practice of *kumbhaka*. This verse states that first perspiration, then trembling, and then finally steadiness signals readiness for the practice of retention. In her commentary Muktibodhananda explained that perspiration marks *pranic* awakening, and that when the *nadis* are purified and *prana* starts to flow unobstructed (and thus more rapidly) it can

cause trembling and twitching. Verse 2.13 recommends perspiration from practice be rubbed back into the skin, and subsequent commentary suggests that the sweat from *pranayama* contains hormones that nourish the seven *dhatu*s. Once ready for *kumbhaka*, verse 2.11 recommends that it be practiced four times each day (early morning, midday, evening, and midnight) on an empty stomach, until the *sadhaka* can retain the breath for 80 counts without strain. Verse 2.14 states that when starting to practice, the *sadhaka* should consume milk with ghee. Muktibodhananda elucidated that fats are burned up quickly when practicing *pranayama*, and the animal hormones in milk and ghee keep one connected to physical plane and slow psychic development. She specifically warned that if psychic development happens too rapidly, the *sadhaka* risks becoming psychologically unstable.

Nine different *pranayama* practices are described in the second chapter of HYP, with general instruction for how to practice them offered by Muktibodhananda. These include *nadi shodana pranayama* (alternate nostril breath), *suryabedha pranayama* (vitality stimulating breath), *ujjayi pranayama* (psychic breath), *seetkari pranayama* (hissing breath), *sheetali pranayama* (cooling breath), *bhastrika pranayama*, *bhramari pranayama* (humming bee breath), *moorcha pranayama* (swooning breath), and *plavini pranayama* (gulping breath). Furthermore, verse 2.44 mentions eight different types of *kumbhaka*, and verses 2.45–2.46 introduce the role of the *bandhas* (locks) to facilitate *kumbhaka*. The *bandhas* are described in greater detail in a subsequent section of this chapter.

HYP theme two. The verses and commentary of chapter two make repeated mention of the following four central purposes for practicing *pranayama*: (a) purify the *nadi* so that *ida* and *pingala nadi* are balanced and *sushumna nadi* is activated, (b) increase the vibratory frequency of the bodymind through the practice of retention at the peak of inhalation, (c) decrease

attachment to or identification with the bodymind through the practice of retention after all the air has been expelled via exhalation (eliminating fear of death), and (d) experience perfect stillness in bodymind through *kevala kumbhaka* and *manonmani* (spontaneous cessation of thoughts) thus awakening *kundalini*. This fourth and last purpose highlights another subtheme: There is a direct relationship between the breath and the mind.

At the start of chapter two, verse 2.2 states, “when prana moves, chitta moves. When prana is without movement, chitta is without movement...”(p. 150). In her commentary on this verse, Muktibodhananda stated:

When you retain the breath you are stopping nervous impulses in different parts of the body and harmonizing the brain wave patterns. In pranayama, it is the duration of breath retention which has to be increased. The longer the breath is held, the greater the gap between nervous impulses and their responses in the brain. When retention is held for a prolonged period mental agitation is curtailed. (p. 151)

The relationship between controlling the breath and controlling the mind is discussed at length throughout Muktibodhananda’s writing. As early as the introduction, Muktibodhananda discusses the connection between the left nostril, the delta waves that occur in deep sleep, and the flow of *shakti* through *ida nadi*. Similarly she articulates the relationship between the right nostril, beta waves that occur when the mind is racing, and the flow of *shakti* through *pingala nadi*. She stated that when both nostrils are equally unobstructed, *shakti* is flowing through *sushumna nadi*, facilitating meditation without strain. The pinnacle of this connection between mind and breath is the union of *prana* and *chitta*, *ida* and *pingala*, within *sushumna* at the *ajna chakra*, which awakens *kundalini*. On this, Muktibodhananda wrote:

When you go deep in meditation, the mind stops; it ceases to have any association with objects, time, and space, and with ego also. Then the breath stops, maybe for one minute, two three or four. That is kevala kumbhaka. It is a real and very significant event in the life of a Yoga aspirant, for when the breath stops light immediately dawns. A light manifests in the eyebrow centre and the whole frontal passage is illumined, as though it were daybreak. (p. 273)

Kevala kumbhaka is said to be the “perfection of pranayama” (p. 269) and marks the initiation of a process of physical and psychological transformation.

The third chapter of HYP covers the *bandhas* and *mudras*. The *bandhas* act as a bridge between *pranayama* and *mudra* and lock *prana shakti* inside the bodymind to facilitate longer retentions. On this, Muktibodhananda stated, “Bandha is generally considered to mean ‘lock’ as it literally means ‘to bind’, ‘to hold captive’, or ‘to contract’” (p. 332). The three *bandhas* are: (a) *Moola Bandha* (the root lock or perineum/cervix retraction lock), (b) *Uddiyana Bandha* (abdominal retraction lock), and (c) *Jalandhara Bandha* (throat lock). *Moola bandha* is the retraction of the cervix, perineum, and anus, contracting those muscles and pulling them up and in. Verses 3.61–3.65 and their subsequent commentary specifically discuss the purpose and benefit of *moola bandha*. The root lock is said to prevent *prana shakti* from draining out of the bodymind by directing the sexual or creative impulse up and away from the generative organs, and instead channeling that energy to fuel the process of awakening. Muktibodhananda remarks that in combination with the other *bandhas*, *moola bandha* plays a role in the awakening of *kundalini* by preventing the escape of downward flowing *apana*, which otherwise facilitates elimination.

Verses 3.55–3.60 and their subsequent commentary address the nuances of *uddiyana bandha*. *Uddiyana bandha* is the retraction of the abdominal muscles in and up. *Uddiyana* can be translated as rise up or fly and in her commentary Muktibodhananda remarked that *uddiyana bandha* reverses the downward flow of *apana vayu*. She further described that in combination with the other *bandhas*, *uddiyana bandha* unites *apana vayu* with *prana vayu* and *samana vayu* in the navel center. These three fuel willpower and the transformative fire of *manipura chakra*.

Verses 3.70–3.73 and their subsequent commentary give a description and loose instruction for the application of *jalandhara bandha*. In her commentary Muktibodhananda wrote:

Many major nerve fibres pass through the neck. When *jalandhara* is performed it exerts pressure on them and the flow of nervous impulses to the brain is restricted. These impulses collect in the cervical plexus and when the *bandha* is released they flood into the brain. The force of these impulses helps to activate higher centres in the brain.

(p. 353)

The verses on *jalandhara bandha* also discuss how this lock catches the *bindu*, or nectar, that falls from the midbrain, catching it in the throat and preventing it from falling into the gastric fire. Muktibodhananda explained that the *bindu* references the hormonal secretions of the pituitary, thyroid, and other endocrine glands. She further referred to the degenerative role of these secretions in aging and the reversal of this affect through the application of *jalandhara bandha*. She continued:

...the flow of nectar from the *bindu* cannot be entirely equated with the hormonal secretions from the pituitary gland, just as *prana* cannot be equated with nervous impulses. These terms refer also to the subtle processes taking place in the pranic, mental

and psychic bodies. Therefore, it should not be understood only on a physiological basis.
(p. 355)

In addition to these roles, *jalandhara bandha* is also combined with the other two bandhas in what is referred to as *maha bandha*, or the “great lock” (p. XX).

Verses 2.19–2.22 and their subsequent commentary offer instruction for two techniques in how to practice *maha bandha*. *Maha bandha* is the practice of the three locks simultaneously. It is repeatedly mentioned that the practice of *maha bandha* is perfected in the context of *maha veda mudra*. *Mudras* are a combination of *asana*, *pranayama*, and *bandha*, where the *asana* held opens certain *nadi* or pathways, *pranayama* activates *prana shakti*, and the *bandhas* lock the *prana shakti* in the bodymind, preventing its escape and directing it to flow through specific *nadi* opened by the *asana*. In her commentary, Muktibodhananda suggests that when consistently practiced, *maha bandha* and *maha mudra* will awaken *kundalini*, and *maha vedha mudra* directs *kundalini* up *sushumna*.

Verses 3.10–3.18 and subsequent commentary describe two techniques for how to practice *maha mudra* (the great attitude) and the benefits of these practices. Similarly, verses 3.19–3.22 outline two techniques for how to practice *maha bandha* and describe the benefits of this practice. In her commentary on verses 2.23 and 2.24, Muktibodhananda stated:

Moola bandha forces the prana upwards and prevents it from escaping through the lower outlets, and jalandhara prevents an upward leakage. When uddiyana bandha is added, prana and apana are forced toward each other, to eventually meet in the navel centre.

When the two opposite poles of energy unite in the navel centre, they are forced upward to ajna. (p. 302)

Later in her commentary on verse 2.25 she wrote:

The purpose of maha vedha mudra is to channelize the prana accumulated through maha mudra and maha bandha. When you perform these practices without maha vedha mudra, it is like having a car full of petrol, turning the ignition, but keeping the foot on the brake. To get the car moving you must slowly release the brake and steer in a calculated manner. Similarly when kundalini shakti has been awakened through maha mudra and maha bandha, it must be released and directed by the practice of maha vedha mudra.

(p. 303)

The technique itself, as well as the purpose and benefits of *maha vedha mudra*, are described in verses 3.26–3.31 and their subsequent commentary. Aside from *maha vedha mudra*, six other *mudras* are discussed in the over the course of the third chapter: *khechari mudra* (attitude of dwelling in supreme consciousness), *vipareeta karani mudra* (reversing attitude), *vajroli mudra* (thunderbolt attitude), *sahajoli mudra* (attitude of spontaneous arousing), *amaroli mudra* (attitude arousing immortality), and *shakti chalana mudra* (attitude of moving the energy).

Verses 3.32–3.54 and their commentary discuss the purpose, benefit, phenomenology, and practice of *khechari mudra*. This mudra is achieved by training the tip of the tongue to turn back and reach up the nasal cavity into the cranium. To do this, the root of the tongue is cut a little every seven days, massaged to elongate, and rubbed with herbs and salt to prevent infection. This practice takes place over the course of six months until the tongue is long enough to touch the eyebrow center or base of the midbrain. The transformational benefits of drinking the *bindu* on the *sadhaka*'s physical, emotional, mental, psychic, and *pranic* being are described at length.

Verses 3.78–3.82 and their commentary address purpose, benefit, phenomenology, and practice of *vipareeta karani mudra*. This mudra is an inversion where either the legs are up on a

wall with the low back elevated on a cushion, or the whole body is balanced on the shoulders. This is said to improve digestion, increase appetite, reverse cerebral insufficiency and dementia, and halt aging by preventing the *bindu* from being burned up by the *agni*.

Vajroli mudra, *sahajoli mudra*, and *amaroli mudra* are preparation and practices that partially constitute *maithuna* (sexual intercourse as meditation). These mudras point to Hatha Yoga as a part of the tradition of Tantra, where sexuality is understood as being a potential tool for transformation rather than an inherent trap for the senses. Verses 3.83–3.91 and their commentary discuss the purpose, benefit, and nuances of *vajroli mudra*, which is a practice intended for men, comprised of gradual upward contractions during emission in intercourse that prevent ejaculation while orgasm is still experienced. Similarly, verses 3.92–3.95 describe *sahajoli mudra*, which is described as trifold: (a) the complimentary version of *vajroli mudra* for women, (b) the practice of applying a mixture of the ash from burnt cow manure and water to specific parts of the body, and (c) the practice of wiping a mixture of semen and the ash from burnt cow manure on specific parts of the body after performing *vajroli* during intercourse. Lastly, verses 3.96–3.98 explain *amaroli mudra* as twofold: (a) the practice of drinking the cool midstream of urine, and (b) the practice of withdrawing the seminal fluid back into the male organ after it has been released. These three mudras and their role in the tradition of Tantric Yoga will be considered further in the discussion of the second subtheme unique to HYP.

Verses 3.112–3.121 elucidate the purpose, benefit, phenomenology, and practice of *shakti chalana mudra*. This *mudra* is the combination of sitting in *siddhasana*, practicing *nauli shatkarma*, and *pranayama* through the right nostril with *kumbhaka* to direct awakened *kundalini* to move up through *sushumna nadi*. While chapter four describes practices that facilitate the

different stages of *samadhi*, these practices are said to arise spontaneously, and *shakti chalana mudra* is the last practice that requires willpower to complete.

In summary, the verses and commentary of HYP suggest that the practices of Hatha Yoga (*asana, shatkarma, pranayama, bandha, and mudra*) are designed to purify and heal the bodymind, transform the personality, give practitioners the power to willfully direct their physiology, awaken dormant parts of the brain, and allow the practitioner to realize their full potential.

Science. Similar to Satchidananda's argument in YS, Muktibodhananda repeatedly identifies the theory and practice of Yoga as a science, attempting to dispel religious connotations. In her commentary on verse 1.49 she stated:

Liberation is not a religious word. It indicates a scientific process of uniting two opposite forces. When these opposite forces combine, an explosion occurs which releases potential energy. In Tantra the forces are called Shiva and Shakti; in Yoga, prana and chitta; in Samkhya, purusha and prakriti; in Vedanta Brahman and jiva; and in physics time and space. These two forces cannot meet at any point, they must unite in the nucleus of matter. When the opposite forces of shakti unite in mooladhara or manipura chakra, then the explosion which occurs releases the potential energy from that centre. Science has seen, when time and space meet in the nucleus of matter, that matter explodes into thousands and thousands of particles. This is the basis of creation. It is how each and every one of us was born, and by the same process the potential consciousness can be liberated from the gross mind. (p. 125)

This passage suggests that Tantra, Yoga, Samkhya, Vedanta, and physics are all scientific rather than faith-based traditions, developed to evolve consciousness. Samkhya and Vedanta are schools

of Hinduism, which is commonly misunderstood as a polytheistic religion. Hinduism itself is a Western construct, and no references to this term exist prior to British colonization (Frawley, 1990). This construct was designed to create a unifying umbrella term, a catch-all for numerous and disparate traditions with a shared foundation of philosophical understanding. As noted in the history, ancient literature communicates Yogic philosophy through epic narratives rich with deities and their pastimes. Yogic mythology is widely understood as symbolic, a means to wrestle with paradoxical conflicts between an abstract ideal philosophy and concrete real phenomenology. From a Hermeneutic perspective, the traditions that comprise Hinduism may be best understood as the keepers of a 5,000-year-old moral discourse.

Muktibodhananda appears to be aware of the dismissive effect of secular bias, or perhaps this bias has been adopted due to globalization of Western values. Either way, she spends a great deal of time trying to shirk religious connotations to Tantra's Hatha Yoga. In the introduction she identifies Yoga as a "science of purification" (p. 4), and stated:

...now people have begun to realize that matter in its ultimate form is energy. Therefore we will have to re-analyze and redefine what the body is and how far this transformation can be effected. Can the body be turned into sunlight? Think about it in terms of science, not in terms of faith or beliefs that you have had (or not had) up until now. If this body can undergo a state of metamorphosis then what is the way? The answer is Yoga. (p. 12)

This begins a thread that Muktibodhananda repeatedly returns to, where she invites the reader to understand *rishis* or *mahasiddhas* as Yogic scientists and undermines preconceived notions of bodymind by introducing subtle phenomena repeatedly observed over a 5,000-year span.

Muktibodhananda asserted that "religions have failed mankind because they have failed to show their adherents the path by which an earnest seeker can evolve a divine body and realize

himself' (p. 400). In her commentary on verse 4.98, offering a detailed explanation of the rationale behind this assertion, she said:

A paper rose can be sprinkled with fragrant water so that it bears a passing resemblance to a real rose bloom, but no one who looks closely can be deceived for very long. In the same way, one may practice virtue, righteousness and morality for a whole life span. However, unless one has confronted the subconscious mind and awakened the dormant energy there, one can only ever remain an imitation....If I am a debauchee or a criminal, perhaps not openly but in the secret recesses of my mind and heart, then why should I suppress it? Is it because of inherent goodness that I do not express my subconscious desires and personality, or is my suppression due to fear? This is the question which sincere religious people will have to ask themselves now. Religions demand you to 'suppress yourself', but if you do so that is where your evolution is arrested, the internal energy becomes blocked, and it can remain so for an entire lifetime. Such suppression brings anxiety, depression and disease upon an individual, and fear, hatred, cruelty, and violence upon society. This is why Tantra proclaims, 'Accept yourself in totality.' Then the cultivation of a real and immortal rose can begin. (p. 401)

Here, Muktibodhananda touches on a concept unique to Tantric Yoga, that a disciplined life of integrity should arise from genuine desire, whereas superimposing a moralistic code of conduct intensifies conflicting drives and has social and psychological repercussions. This concept is the basis for the first subtheme unique to HYP.

Returning again to the introduction, Muktibodhananda remarked on a trend in the West whereby younger generations, dissatisfied by inadequate medical care, are turning toward holistic forms of medicine indigenous to other cultures. She discussed the therapeutic benefit of

Yoga gaining international recognition, and suggested it could play a role in redefining allopathic medicine. She noted:

Physical and mental therapy is one of the most important achievements of hatha Yoga...The psychic and mental diseases which human beings are suffering from are nothing but a state of disharmony in the energetic system. In order to alleviate them we will have to take a new look at our body and enlarge the dimension of modern medical science. We will have to redefine the body, the classification of disease, and the system of diagnosis. (p. 19)

In keeping with this aim, she later referred to Yoga as “the science of the subtle body” (p. 37) and the “oldest science known to man” (p. 279). These descriptions of the scientific rigor, therapeutic benefit, and influential role Yoga might enact on the field of medicine is in alignment with the aim of this project.

Cosmology. While both YS and HYP only loosely refer to Yogic cosmology, the overarching theme of Yoga as a tradition makes relevant its etiology in a rich theoretical discourse surrounding the origin and development of the universe. Beyond the Bhagavata Purana and Yoga Vasistha, the Rigveda also includes extensive speculation on the cosmos and its creation. Yogic cosmology is full of alternative cosmological theories and numerous open-ended questions, presenting diverse philosophy, symbolism, and allegory. These are sometimes clothed with distinct personality, or as expressions of nature with or without anthropomorphism. An example of this is given in verse 1.10 and subsequent commentary on the symbology of the Tortoise. Muktibodhananda remarked:

The creation of the world we know is said to rest on the tortoise. It is an emblem of patience and endurance. According to Hindu mythology, when dissolution of the

universe started to take place, the earth lost its support and was threatened with destruction, lord Visnu came to the rescue and manifested in the form of a tortoise, supporting the earth on his back...This legend is not meant to be taken literally, it is the explanation of what happens during the process of creation and evolution, both externally and internally, and of movement back to the centre of being...the concept of Visnu is an aspect of existence which links prana and consciousness to the physical body and creation. (p. 35)

This symbolic allegory is echoed in the discussion of *kundalini* following the verse at the opening of chapter three. In her commentary Muktibodhananda explained:

According to Hindu belief, there is a thousand headed snake wound round the earth resting on a tortoise and apparently maintaining the earth in its respective orbit. Of course, this is a symbolic explanation of the function of the earth's axis, north and south poles and equator. It represents the distribution of cosmic energy in and around the earth. Without this force there could be no earth, no vegetation, nor inhabitants, etc., similarly, every being has a central axis and centre of balance created by the internal energy force. Without kundalini shakti, without prana, there could be not consciousness and no life. (p. 279)

These references point to the extensive writings on cosmology within the tradition of Yoga.

Muktibodhananda again alludes to Yogic cosmology when she describes the ideal conditions for practice with regard to the nuances of timing. In her commentary on verse 1.16 Muktibodhananda defines our current time as the *kali yuga*. In Yogic cosmology, the universe is cyclically created and destroyed, and time is divided into four epochs or *yugas* that sequentially repeat: *satya yuga*, *treta yuga*, *dvapara yuga*, and *kali yuga*. *Satya yuga* (also known as the

golden age) is the first and best, and conceptualizes a time of truth and perfection. During the *satya yuga* purity reigns, Yogic practice is unnecessary, and humans are honest, youthful, vigorous, erudite and virtuous. There is no agriculture or mining, as the earth yields its bounty willingly, and there is no need for fear, as there are no wars, natural disaster, or disease. The *treta yuga* follows the *satya yuga*. During this time, virtue diminishes, imperialism and colonization emerge, oceans and deserts form, the weather begins to become more extreme, and agriculture and mining come into existence. In the *dvapara yuga*, people become tainted with *tamasic* qualities, their strength and intellect is diminished. Disease becomes rampant, and wars rage. However, people still possess characteristics of youth even in old age, and the average lifespan of humans is around a few centuries. Lastly, *kali yuga* is the final age, our current age, the age of darkness and ignorance. People adopt violent and arrogant tendencies, become slaves to their passions, and society crumbles as leaders become liars and hypocrites. Humans eat forbidden and dirty food, the environment is polluted, and resources become scarce. By the end of *kali yuga* the average lifespan of humans will be as low as 70 years. *Satya yuga* is said to last the length of 1,728,000 years, *treta yuga* 1,296,000 years, *dvapara yuga* 864,000 years, and *kali yuga* 432,000 years. According to Yogic cosmology, there is no absolute start to time, as it is considered infinite and cyclic. Similarly, space and the universe has neither beginning or end. The current universe is just the start of a present cycle preceded by an infinite number of universes and to be followed by another infinite number of universes. The dominant theme in Yogic cosmology is of cycles and repetition. There are multiple universes, each takes birth from chaos, grows, decays and dies into chaos, to be reborn again. Further, there are different layered worlds and parallel realities. The diversity of Yogic cosmological theory may reflect its

tendency to not reject emerging ideas and empirical observations, but to adapt and integrate them creatively (Frawley, 1990).

Moral vision. The subthemes identified as comprising the moral vision of the tradition vary between the source texts due to the fundamental differences between Vedantic and Tantric Yoga. The most overt difference surrounds the first two limbs of Yoga, *yama* and *niyama*. The position that this moral code of conduct should arise spontaneously constitutes the first subtheme unique to HYP, and is discussed later in this chapter. While the motivation behind the not to include the moral framework of Yoga as an overt part of practice is understandable, it appears to have had the unintended effect of causing this moral framework to be communicated in passive and unconscious ways throughout the text. Furthermore, far more verses and subsequent commentary stress the necessity of the *guru* than are present in YS, suggesting a heightened need for a regulatory or supervisory figure when the moral framework of Yoga has been removed.

Two main reasons are repeatedly referenced to explain the import ascribed to the *guru*. The first reason has to do with the value placed on surrender, which harkens back to the identified subtheme about the ego: Without an attitude of surrender, practice will fail to yield fruit, or the fruits harvested will be squandered on the ego. While this subtheme is one HYP shares with YS, there is a notable increase in how frequent both the verses and commentary of HYP pay homage to the *guru*. In her commentary on verse 4.48, Muktibodhananda makes an analogy between the *guru* and the pineal gland, the disciple and the pituitary gland. She then uses this analogy to stress the importance of subjugating one's will to the *guru's* teachings by discussing all the physiological distress that results when the pituitary gland does not follow the direction of the pineal gland. The totality of surrender can be gleaned from her commentary on verse 3.2, where Muktibodhananda stated

A guru's instructions must be followed implicitly, the disciple must be like a patient under anesthesia in an operating theatre and let the guru be the surgeon. The patient who screams and runs away in terror can never be helped. Likewise, a disciple has to be subservient to the guru's commands and his actions must be in accordance with the guru's will. (p. 282)

The complete surrender expressed in this passage requires immense trust, and a number of passages speak to the need for both trust and devotion. This absolute trust builds a deeply intimate relationship, where the practitioner internalizes the teacher as a self-object. This is exemplified in her description of *mantra japa* when Muktibodhananda stated, "When you receive the mantra from your guru, you are actually receiving a portion of energy from him in seed potential form" (p. 602). In her commentary on verse 3.125, Muktibodhananda explained that more important than the practice itself is the devotion and attention embodied by the practitioner. On verse 3.130, she commented, "the guru/disciple relationship must be established by a process of trust and surrender if the practices are to bear the greater fruit" (p. 460). Furthermore, Muktibodhananda suggested that to awaken *kundalini*, the *sadhaka* requires tremendous faith, conviction, and a powerful and enlightened *guru*.

Numerous passages explain how the act of surrendering to one's teacher is what aids the practitioner, protecting her from the pitfalls of the ego. Earlier in her commentary on verse 3.2, Muktibodhananda remarked, "For a *sadhaka*, the greatest problem to tackle is the *ahamkara* or 'ego', and if there is not *guru* to keep the ego trimmed, it will prove to be an insurmountable barrier" (p. 280). As stated in another subtheme: the practice of Yoga is not universal but particular, sensitive to the era, environment, stage of life, time of day, and the *sadhaka*'s constitution, diet, and lifestyle. Without the *guru*, the *sadhaka* is subject to practice based on

attachment and aversion rather than what will further their progress and likely confront them with the shadow side of their psyche.

The second driving motivation behind the privileged position of the *guru* is in relation to the risk involved in practicing without guidance. HYP is riddled with verses and commentary explaining how a realized teacher protects against harm associated with malpractice. Initially, this is conveyed by referencing another subtheme and the damage done by selecting or performing practices that are not ideal for the practitioner and her context. Verse 2.16 states, “By proper practice of pranayama etc., all diseases are eradicated. Through improper practice all diseases can arise” (p. 180). In her commentary on verse 2.10, Muktibodhananda stated, “Pranayama must be developed slowly and systematically so that the lungs and nervous system are never harmed in any way. That is why it is always recommended that pranayama are practiced under the guidance of a teacher or guru” (p. 170). She goes on to explain that *sadhana* should increase only as the *sadhaka*’s mental, physical, and psychic capacity increases. In her commentary on verse 2.11, she explained, “Until the mind and body are purified, go slowly with your practices according to the guru’s instructions. Do not be over-enthusiastic” (p. 174).

The risk of practicing without a *guru* is explicit in the section of the text discussing the *shatkarma*. In her commentary on verse 2.23, she explained, “The shatkarma are very powerful practices that can never be learned from books or taught by inexperienced people” (p. 188). The risk of inducing a psychotic break through *siddhis* and psychic experiences is discussed in the commentary for verses 2.66–2.67. In this passage, Muktibodhananda asserted, “As for psychic experiences, those who have them often end up in a mental hospital because they have no guru to guide them through their spiritual awakening” (p. 259). This warning is extended to many of the *mudras*, particularly *khechhari mudra*, where the bottom of the tongue is cut away slowly, as well

as *sahajoli*, *vajroli*, and *amaroli mudras*, which are part of the practice of *maithuna*. This is again reflected in the discussion of verse 3.117 when Muktibodhananda wrote, “Even if one should succeed in arousing kundalini it is very difficult to integrate the experience and sustain the awakening. At a certain point, fear for one’s sanity is overwhelming, and only the guru’s form can dispel it” (p. 436). This is echoed again in her commentary on verse 3.2, when she said:

People who awaken kundalini without a guru have no direction in life. They do not know how to utilize and harness the immense quantity of energy that has developed within and they do not understand what is happening to them. They become lost in a maze of meaningless and intense experiences and may end up in a mental hospital. (p. 281)

While the risk involved with practice is clearly and repeatedly articulated, there is no overt recognition that Tantric secularism, or the attempt to divorce practice from the moral framework that gives it meaning, may effectively increase the risk and thus the need for a *guru*.

Regardless of secular intent, HYP communicates a number of values and principles, such as the recognition of or concern given to the interdependence of all life, as conveyed in a shared subtheme: Mind, body, and nature (the whole of existence) cannot be understood or effectively treated as separate. This highlights the Ayurvedic concept that our diet and lifestyle cannot be separated from our mental health. This is communicated overtly in the section on the ideal conditions for practice. In fact, the commentary of this section unconsciously or indirectly advocates for the adoption of many *yama* and *niyama* through the lifestyle, attitude, and environmental conditions promoted.

The import attributed to interdependence is reflected in a subtheme shared by both YS and HYP: Devotion to justice, harmony, and balance honors the unified nature of existence. The

values of justice, harmony, and balance can be witnessed in the commentary on verse 1.64–1.66 when Muktibodhananda asserts that age and capacity to perform specific practices should not limit the *sadhaka*. This implies that Yogic practice was intended to be universally accessible. Furthermore, the discussion of verse 4.2 articulates that awakening, or realizing our full potential is everyone’s birthright, and the goal we are all working toward, whether we are conscious of it or not.

Another fundamental value of Yoga as described in HYP is reminiscent of the subtheme about the limits of knowledge: All knowledge obtained via the mind is limited and conditional, and knowing beyond (or without) mind is closer to experience than intellectual understanding. This is reflected in the commentary on verse 3.54, when Muktibodhananda wrote, “All minds are only minute parts and expressions of a single collective mind. To realize this collective mind in operation is called *manonmani*” (p. 331). This passage is a paradox; it suggests that to tap into collective consciousness one must experience *manonmani*, a state which was described earlier in the text as the absence of mind. She goes on to say that all disciplines of thought are, “not absolute in themselves, but are the various aspects of a single creative seed and source, like rays emerging from the sun” (p. 331). The suggestion here is that no ray conveys the complete light of the sun, no discipline can communicate absolute truth. This is echoed again in the commentary on verse 3.103, where Muktibodhananda pondered:

There is no ultimate reality. Nor can there be only one way to realize it...There are as many forms as there are individuals to reflect on them...Ultimate reality is a concept which has something to do with the mind, not with mindlessness. When the body dies, when the mind is completely dissolved, when the individual ego evaporates, and when there is no more ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘he’, ‘she’, then who is going to see whom? Who is going to

know whom?...How can you know the knower by which you know everything. (p. 414)

Here Muktibodhananda expressed that all traditions, including Yoga, are created by the mind, and are thus incomplete. Furthermore, she implies that knowing is always and already dualistic, and that experience may be the only way to glimpse unity.

The last value mentioned here is one discussed at length in both texts, and thus constitutes another subtheme: Suffering itself has value and welcoming suffering is beneficial. Pain redefined as valuable in the process of transformation is most clearly conceptualized and promoted through the concept of *tapas*, and references to which litter the pages of HYP. The commentary for verse 1.4 draws a link between penance, austerity, and reward. The commentary for verse 1.10 suggests that those practicing *tapas* will be spared from the heat of practice. Here protection from suffering is available through transforming the meaning of suffering. The commentary for verse 1.16 discussed how non-attachment is attained through embracing suffering and stressed the importance of surrendering attachment to worldly desire, sense gratification, recognition and individual gain. Lastly, in her commentary on verse 4.74-4.75, Muktibodhananda remarked on the benefit of suffering when she wrote, “Suffering is a very powerful trigger in arousal of kundalini in those whose psyche is able to tolerate it” (p. 572). In this passage the utility or benefit of suffering is clear, suffering can trigger or instigate the process of awakening.

Subtheme B: Unity and Duality

The phenomenon of Yoga is the experience of being undifferentiated never-changing consciousness (Unity), the source that differentiates to become the myriad ever-changing names and forms in existence (Duality). Both texts repeatedly alluded to or overtly described Yoga as a state of being or underlying reality. Any discussion of this or similar phenomena always and

inherently falls short. A state of being is meant to be experienced through the body, to be viscerally rather than verbally known.

The definition of Yoga as a tradition (part a) and a phenomenon (part b) are both independently articulated and thematically discussed. With regard to the former, both source texts describe the tradition of Yoga as inclusive of (but not limited to) an extensive and nuanced: theoretical framework, philosophy, psychology, medicine, science, cosmology, astrology, and moral vision. With regard to the latter, the phenomenon of Yoga is described as the experience of being undifferentiated never-changing consciousness (Unity), the source that differentiates into the myriad ever-changing names and forms of existence (Duality). In the coming sections I will discuss the thematic findings that support and explain the above definitions.

Unity and duality in the Yoga Sûtras. Yoga is described as the unwavering experience of being unified consciousness. The phenomenon of Yoga is mentioned as early as sûtra 1.3, which describes that with the cessation of *vrittis*, “the seer [Self] abides in his own nature” (p. 6). In his commentary on this sûtra, Satchidananda stresses that we are this seer, not the body or the mind, but pure consciousness. On this state, Satchidananda said, “In that state, only the consciousness is there and nothing else” (p. 35). This is again mirrored in sûtra 4.34, which describes the realization of Yoga, “...the power of pure consciousness settles into its own pure nature.” (p. 231)

In his commentary on sûtra 1.4, Satchidananda stated, “Behind all these ever-changing phenomena is a never changing One” (p. 9). Satchidananda alluded to this description of Yoga repeatedly throughout YS. As such, this central concept emerged in support of the broader shared subtheme: Veiled by the ever-changing names and forms in existence is one never-changing unified consciousness. This concept was previously addressed in two sections on

aspects of the tradition of Yoga. The section on Yogic science discussed the theory that this unified consciousness pervades all animate and inanimate forms in existence, and the section on Yogic cosmology explained the universe as originating from this source consciousness.

Identification with the bodymind as ignorance, ignorance as the cause of suffering, and the relationship between *vasanas*, *samskaras*, and *vrittis* as the force sustaining ignorance is discussed at length in the previous section. Similarly, Satchidananda repeatedly remarked about why our perception is dualistic if the underlying reality is one of unity. The rationale for how we lose touch with unified consciousness emerged as another subtheme: Our perception or experience of duality is caused by our identification with the bodymind. With regard to this Satchidananda said, “You seem to have lost your original identity and have identified with your thoughts and your body” (p. 7). Sûtra 2.20 takes this line of reasoning further regarding how we mistake duality for reality, which states, “The Seer is nothing but the power of seeing which, although pure, appears to see through the mind” (p. 110). Moreover, sûtra 2.27 suggests that before one longs to experience the Self rather than the world, the practitioner must pass through sorrow, fear, and delusion and the desire to act, avoid pain, seek pleasure, knowledge, and material wealth, must cease.

Cumulatively, the sûtras in YS might be understood as a theoretical explanation for how we find our way back to Yoga as our true nature. While the phenomenon of Yoga is the aim of the tradition, Yoga is also consistently described as the experiential result of practice. For example, the practice of *trataka* as an expression of *pratyahara* is discussed as a means to train the senses to remain directed inward towards the self while moving about in the world. Similarly, ego is described as the central barrier for experiencing Yoga. Sûtra 2.26 states, “uninterrupted discriminative discernment is the method for its removal” (p. 118). This

highlighted another central concept that supports this subtheme: Through the practical application of the eight limbs, we experience absorption, *samadhi*, or Yoga. Another example is Satchidananda's commentary on practice of *mantra japa*, where its impact tunes the instrument of our bodies to vibrate in harmony with, "cosmic power. By that tuning you feel that force in you, imbibe all those qualities, get the cosmic vision, transcend all your limitations, and finally become that transcendental reality" (p. 49). Another example of this is sūtra 2.52, which claims that through a particular practice the, "veil over inner light is destroyed" (p. 163). Almost the entirety of book three is a discussion of the *siddhis* that result from different stages of absorption or degrees of unity.

In his commentary on sūtra 1.17, Satchidananda articulates the transformation of unity to duality as five-fold: absorption, ego, mind, subtle elements or energy, and gross physical form. He further explained that the stages of *samadhi*, or the steps to realization, follow a similar progression but in opposite order. One must first merge with all of physical creation, then with the subtle energetic sheath, then with the mind, then the ego, then shed any lingering sense of identity, surrendering to an experience of complete absorption or unity. This highlights another central concept that supports this subtheme: Yogic transformation is an experience that moves from gross to subtle.

Unity and Duality in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. Both texts repeatedly allude to or overtly describe Yoga as a unified state of being or underlying reality. A discussion of a phenomenon, especially one so subtle, will always fall short, as words can never fully capture or convey experience. Experience is known viscerally through the body, not with the mind. The aim of this section is to present quotations from HYP that point to Yoga as a phenomenon, giving the reader a glimpse of the experience so that they might imagine it.

At the outset of this text Muktibodhananda wrote, “all matter in this creation is alive. This is the first point. It is also conscious. That is the second point” (p. 7). She supports this assertion by explaining that all matter, whether animate or inanimate, is comprised of bundled energy, and this energy or *shakti* is the manifestation of universal consciousness, or *shiva*. HYP refers to three types of *shakti*, the first two are *prana shakti* and *chitta shakti* (individual consciousness, or mind). To clarify the importance and relationship between these two types of *shakti* Muktibodhananda remarked:

Every object in the universe, right from the smallest atom to the largest star, is composed of these two shaktis or energies. When they interact with each other, when the interplay of these two forces takes place, then creation begins to unfold. (p. 7)

The third type of *shakti* discussed is *kundalini shakti*, which lies dormant at the base of the spine until awakened through the union of *prana* and *chitta*.

When *prana* flowing through *pingala nadi* and *chitta* flowing through *ida nadi* unite within *sushumna nadi* at the *ajna chakra*, *kundalini* awakens. In the introduction Muktibodhananda wrote:

The awakening of kundalini is the subject matter of hatha Yoga...When awakening occurs, then kundalini ascends to higher realms of consciousness, and finally it is established in sahasrara chakra at the crown of the head. When kundalini is established in sahasrara chakra, that is called Yoga, not hatha Yoga. This is the difference between Yoga and hatha Yoga. Yoga means union of Shiva (consciousness) and Shakti (energy). Shakti is kundalini energy, Shiva is supreme consciousness seated in the sahasrara chakra. (p. 13)

Here, Hatha Yoga awakens *kundalini* initiating a process of spontaneous ascension until she reaches the *sahasrara chakra*, where she unites with *shiva* (cosmic/unified consciousness) seated in the *sahasrara*. Yoga as a phenomenon is this union.

The theoretical unity of *shiva* and *shakti* invites a revision of the first concept that emerged in support of this subtheme: Veiled by the ever-changing names and forms in existence is one never-changing unified consciousness. From a Tantric perspective, the interplay of *prana shakti* and *chitta shakti* is what results in the ever-changing names and forms in existence. Their union awakens *kundalini shakti*, the creative force or manifestation of *shiva*, the one never-changing unified consciousness. The material universe is woven into being through the interplay of these subtle energies and upheld by unified consciousness. This is mirrored in her commentary on verse 2.1 where Muktibodhananda said:

In Yoga and Tantra there is an eternal truth; the basis of existence depends on two forces, Shiva and Shakti, or ‘consciousness’ and ‘energy.’ Ultimately they are not two forces but one; Shakti is the creative force of consciousness or Shiva. The purpose of hatha Yoga is to realize Shiva or consciousness by means of Shakti. (p. 149)

The linguistic choice to describe unified consciousness as veiled by the ever-changing names and forms in existence has to do with the Vedantic concept that our material existence is an illusion, or *maya*. In Tantra, material existence is not an illusion, but rather comprised of layered realities that exist without our recognizing them. Muktibodhananda noted that our inability to perceive or experience all matter as alive and conscious is due to toxicity in the body. On this, she remarked:

This physical body as it is seen, is the gross perception. If you look at this body with psychic eyes, or with the eyes of specialized and sophisticated electronic equipment, perhaps you would understand that it has its own subtle counterpart also. (p. 8)

Yogic theory suggests that initially even our bodies appear as simply concrete physical entities until we engage in a thorough process of purification through the practice of Hatha Yoga. This invites a revision of this subtheme as follows, All the ever-changing names and forms in existence are just varied expressions of one never-changing unified consciousness. HYP's redefinition of this subtheme changes the explanation for why we perceive *shiva* and *shakti* as separate. Thus, an additional subtheme: Our perception or experience of duality is due to the toxicity of the bodymind. Notably, in the context of Tantric Yoga, attachment, aversion, or expressions of ego in general are viewed as impurities or impediments to the harmonious functioning of the bodymind. In her commentary on verse 2.36, Muktibodhananda remarked, "Impurity is the psychological stuff which manifests when you sit for meditation" (p. 224), and listed the following five types of impurities: sensual desire, anger, infatuation, arrogance, and envy. In her commentary on the verse 1.17, she explained that after purification occurs practice becomes spontaneous, the vibration of the bodymind increases, and one's perceptive abilities improve.

While we mistakenly perceive duality until we undergo a process of transformation, it is clear in HYP that Yoga as a phenomenon, or the experience of unity, is the pinnacle of the tradition. In her commentary on verse 3.54 she wrote:

This sloka indicates the experience of oneness, union with the supreme, which is realized by the yogi...there is only unity amidst seeming diversity; the many fragmentary experiences, seeming realities, individuals and distinctions we confront, are only

elements of the greater self, which includes all diversities and relative contradictions within itself. (p. 330)

This experience of sustained nonduality or unity is referred to as the attainment of *kaivalya*, or liberation, and throughout HYP it is suggested that this is not only the highest or most evolved state for a human being, it is every person's true nature. One who has attained *kaivalya* while still remaining seated in the body is called a *jivanmukta*.

In her commentary on verse 4.16, Muktibodhananda articulated that Yoga as a phenomenon, or the experience of unity, “is depicted in Tantra as a man and woman, Shiva and Shakti, in an interlocking embrace” (p. 489). This harkens back to the Tantric practice of *maithuna* as a doorway to the phenomenon of Yoga. In previous commentary on verse 3.83, she noted, “In mundane life, the climax of sexual experience is the one time when the mind becomes completely void of its own accord and consciousness beyond the body can be glimpsed” (p. 372). In Tantra, this opportunity for awakening is utilized through a sequence of disciplined practices where the potential for bliss is extended beyond the temporary experience of orgasm. Once perfected, “...this expanded state of consciousness becomes a permanent experience” (p. 389). *Samadhi*, another term used to describe Yoga as a phenomenon, is often described in HYP as one of indescribable ecstasy. This points to another subtheme HYP shares with YS: The fleeting pleasures gained through sensual experiences in the bodymind are a drop of water when compared to the ocean of bliss that is one's true nature. The phenomenon of Yoga, or experience of union, is beautifully captured in verse 4.59, “As camphor dissolves into fire, and salt dissolves into sea, in samadhi the mind dissolves into ‘Thatness’” (p. 552).

Shared Source Theme Two: Yoga in the West

Yoga in the West, as discussed in the Yoga Sûtras. The previous discussion of the first

shared theme illustrated how YS and HYP present Yoga as a both a complex multifaceted tradition and a phenomenological state of being. The second shared theme addresses concerns Satchidananda raised about the incomplete or inaccurate dissemination of Yoga. Typically, where neither the tradition nor its phenomenological aim are fully realized, practiced, or communicated by the vast majority of modern-day teachers (Satchidananda, 1978). Below I discuss the thematic findings that support and explain this thematic assertion.

As exemplified in the discussion of the first theme, the tradition of Yoga is extensive and nuanced. The practical application of Yoga as described in YS is informed by a complex moral, philosophical and theoretical framework, and expressed through a refined collection of techniques that comprise the methodology of its science, medicine, and psychology. In a handful of passages throughout YS, Satchidananda lamented that the widespread and reductionist understanding of Yoga so poorly captures the nuances of the tradition. The introduction itself opens with the following statement by Satchidananda:

When the word Yoga is mentioned, most people immediately think of some physical postures for relaxing and limbering up the body. This is one aspect of Yogic science, but actually only a very small part and relatively recent in development. The physical Yoga, or Hatha Yoga, was primarily designed to facilitate the real practice of Yoga – namely, the understanding and complete mastery over the mind. So the actual meaning of Yoga is the science of mind. (p. xi)

Satchidananda linked this limited understanding of Yoga with people's fear of or aversion to non-attachment, or renunciation. On this he said, "Many people think that by renouncing everything, by becoming selfless and desireless, there is no enjoyment" (p. 25). He went on to illustrate how desires are by their very nature insatiable, and that even if one obtains beauty,

wealth, pleasure, or recognition it is accompanied by the fear of loss and the drive for more. He clarified how the more one seeks and obtains, the more one has to keep track of and maintain, and thus the more thoughts, stress and tension one experiences. Conversely, with regard to the renunciate he remarked, “Such a person knows the secret of life...the renunciate is always happy because there is nothing for him to lose...by renouncing worldly things you possess the most important sacred property: your peace” (p. 25).

Satchidananda also raised concern about the commodification of Yoga. He explained how teaching Yoga for money is harmful by promoting attachment and limiting access to the tradition. He described how teaching yoga for money stands in opposition to the moral framework of Yoga, particularly with regard to the following three *yamas*: *ahimsa*, *asteya*, and *aparigraha*. In Satchidananda’s commentary on these *yamas*, he explained that taking more than one needs, and that not sharing are considered forms of theft, and harmful to those in need. He described that from the standpoint of Yogic theory, all land and resources are part of the same living body, and should not be claimed as the sole property of any one person. With regard to this he said:

When the mind is free from personal interest we do our work well and feel joyful. Our lives become meaningful. If our minds are free from selfishness and there is sacrifice in everyone’s lives, the very world becomes a heaven, an abode of peace and bliss.

Everything in this life gives. Sacrifice is the law of life...Why should human beings alone lead selfish lives? We are here to give and give and give. What is due to us will come without our worrying about it. (pp. 26–27)

Satchidananda suggests that the dissemination of the tradition should be transmitted by teachers who embody the values of service and surrender.

Satchidananda further clarified that an incomplete or inaccurate transmission of Yoga is not simply a distortion of the tradition, it is dangerous. In his description of the sequential process of awakening, Satchidananda explains that the first layer of awakening, *savitarka samadhi* occurs as the result of one type of *samyama*, when the mind is capable of remaining one pointed and concentrated on a concrete physical object. Regarding the power of a mind capable of practicing *samyama* he said:

The moment the purely focused mind contemplates an object, it goes to the very depth of that object and understands every particle of it. A focused mind gains power, and when that powerful mind concentrates on an object the entire knowledge of that object is revealed to it. (p. 32)

Satchidananda warned that this power is easily misused if not carefully channeled. He cited the discovery of atomic energy as an example of *savitarka samadhi*. He explained that by devoting their collective minds on probing the nature of matter, these scientists were able to gain insight into its basic atomic structure and that obtaining this knowledge gave them power to wield the atom. To stress the danger of realizing this power outside the moral framework of Yoga he said:

So, the benefit of this contemplation is understanding of the inner secrets and powers of the object of contemplation. But what will you do with that power? The danger can be easily realized by seeing how atomic energy has been used for destructive bombs instead of soothing balms. There is a danger in getting all these extraordinary powers. If *samadhi* is practiced without the proper moral background, the result will be dangerous. (p. 32)

When considering all the awe-inspiring *siddhis* that Satchidananda claims are gained from

samyama on different objects and concepts it becomes clear how incomplete or inaccurate transmission of Yogic practices can result in serious consequences. Further discussion of philosophical and practical conflicts apparent in the dissemination of Yoga in the U.S. appears in the section addressing unanswered questions towards the end of the chapter.

Yoga in the West, as discussed in Hatha Yoga Pradipika. The discussion of the first shared theme illustrated how HYP presents Yoga as a both a complex multifaceted tradition and a phenomenological state of being; while the discussion of this second shared theme addresses concerns Muktibodhananda raised about the incomplete or inaccurate dissemination of Yoga. She asserted, as did Satchidananda, that neither the accurate dissemination of the tradition nor its phenomenological aim are fully realized, practiced, or communicated by the vast majority of modern-day teachers. Below I discuss the thematic findings that support and explain this thematic assertion.

Where Satchidananda expressed frequent concerns about Yoga being misunderstood and misapplied, Muktibodhananda extensively discussed the reductionistic way Yoga is now practiced and taught, repeatedly warning readers about the subsequent potential for harm. She made this a clear focus at the outset of the text, having wrote:

In ancient times Yoga was practiced for many years as preparation for higher states of consciousness. Today, however, the real purpose of this great science has been forgotten altogether. The hatha Yoga practices, which were designed by the rishis and sages of old for the evolution of mankind, are now being understood and utilized in a very limited sense...Now the time has come to correct this point, hatha Yoga is a very important science for humanity today. (p. 2)

This passage implies the power of Yoga to further human evolution, and the loss associated with

a reductionistic dissemination of this ancient tradition.

Muktibodhananda articulated the interdependence and complete coordination and collaboration of the organ systems of the body to highlight the problematic dissemination of Yoga. She mentioned the concept that if toxicity or imbalance exists in one system, all others are affected, and suggests that a teacher would ideally be able to identify and treat the root of the disharmony, rather than attempt to resolve the symptoms. She explained:

Most Yoga teachers today, however, do not follow this system. Depending on their knowledge of medical diagnosis, they make a very long list of practices – one for constipation, one for nosebleeds, one for something else. They think that by teaching a sick person various hatha Yoga techniques for his different ailments, he will get better. Their system is based on the popular concept that various diseases belong to different groups, which does not take into account the interrelationship of all the organs and systems. (p. 18)

This passage reflects how Yoga has been interpreted in the context of a compartmentalized concept of the body, an unmistakable feature of allopathic medicine in the West.

Muktibodhananda questioned whether modern day teachers were prone to dissociate the concept of energy conservation as a fundamental component of physical health. The absence of teachings that emphasize discipline and sacrifice makes sense in a sociopolitical context that encourages excessive energy expenditure through sense gratification. Muktibodhananda further critiqued the reductionist interpretation of Yoga as a therapeutic intervention when she wrote:

This is the mistake that most Yoga teachers make in the West... Hatha Yoga has not been used to treat the total person. That is why teachers are not able to raise the level of their pupils...you should not merely feel freedom from disease, but freedom from bondage and

the vagaries of the mind. (p. 20)

Lastly, Muktibodhananda suggested that the aim of Yoga is being ignored, and that practices are widely applied to serve purposes that obfuscate core aspects of the tradition. In her commentary on verse 1.2 she wrote:

In the last fifty years, with the revival of Yoga in the West. It seems that the real aim of Yoga has been overlooked... Today, Yoga is generally practiced to improve or restore health, to reduce stress, to prevent the body from ageing, to build up the body or to beautify it. (p. 27)

Here Muktibodhananda pointed out that Western teachers and students are mistaking the side effects of Yoga for the purpose, and in effect reinforcing attachment to the bodymind.

Muktibodhananda also recognized that the ideal conditions, frequency, and intensity of practice are virtually impossible for the modern person to adhere to. With regard to this, she noted, “the specifications laid down in this text are for a recluse who lives away from society, free from family and obligations” (p. 308). For this reason she stressed the importance of the *guru* to give instruction with regard to the type, frequency, and intensity of practice appropriate to the context of the Yogi. This again highlights the role of a realized teacher as gatekeeper to insure techniques are not decontextualized, misunderstood, or applied in ways that are inappropriate to the era and environment.

Muktibodhananda noted that during the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries there were efforts to purify the Tantric system, and that this gave rise to Hatha Yoga. She explained:

Matsyendranath, Gorakhnath and a few other yogis in the tradition found that this important science was being ignored by serious-minded people and being wrongly taught by others. So they separated the ‘hatha Yoga’ and the ‘raja Yoga’ practices of Tantra

from the rest and left out the rituals of Tantra altogether, not even mentioning them. (p. 3)

This effort to mark the first time the tradition of Yoga was compartmentalized, where technique was isolated from some of the moral, cultural, and historical context. This attempt to make Yoga a universally applicable method may have inadvertently facilitated a process of selective appropriation.

Differentiated Themes

While the source texts share several themes and subthemes, it is important also to note where they differ from one another. In this section, I present the differentiated themes I observed in the two primary Yogic source texts.

Differentiated themes in the Yoga Sûtras

Implications of decontextualized Yoga. Fidelity with the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* is where the Yogic path begins, and practice divorced from this moral framework causes harm. What follows is a presentation of the first theme that is unique to Patanjali's Yoga Sûtras. The discussion of this theme illustrates the emphasis the sûtras placed on the moral framework of the Yoga, and is reflective of the tradition of Vedanta from which the sûtras arose. Furthermore, Vedanta, or the school of philosophy drawing from the Vedas, conceptualized the body as part of *maya*, where the senses present obstacles to awakening in the form of attachment and aversion. Below I discuss the thematic findings that support and explain this thematic assertion.

It is no accident that prior to introducing the eight limbs of Yogic practice, Patanjali devoted 33 of 196 sûtras to highlight the obstacles to practice and the realization of Yoga. These obstacles are specifically addressed in a previous section on the practical application of the

tradition. What is relevant here is the explanation of the insidious way these obstacles arise, the intractable and sometimes invisible way they take hold, and the difficulty associated with escaping their grip. In this way, Patanjali and Satchidananda laid the groundwork for the first two limbs, *yama* and *niyama*, which make clear what is requisite, what is prohibited, and communicate the moral framework of the tradition.

The *yamas* and *niyamas* are discussed at length in previous sections on the practical application and moral framework of Yoga. The distortion of the Yoga tradition discussed previously in the second shared theme supports Satchidananda's assertion that without a guiding system of values, we risk the dangers associated with moral relativism. Satchidananda made this argument most overtly when he said, "There is a danger in getting all these extraordinary powers. If *samadhi* is practiced without the proper moral background, the result will be dangerous" (p. 32). *Yama* and *niyama* is the explicit communication of this moral framework, and without it the seeker is at risk for having their practice derailed, and should their practice succeed regardless, they would be susceptible to the misuse of the extraordinary power YS claims would ensue.

While hermeneutic interpretation pays special attention to the particularities of language, it is equally important to note what is not being communicated and said. While the clear articulation of the first theme unique to YS occurs only once, it can be inferred by what is unsaid by evaluating the number of sūtras assigned to aspects relevant to it. The vast majority of sūtras in the book on the practical application of Yoga are devoted to the explanation of *yama* and *niyama*. From a psychodynamic perspective, silences and exclusions of particular thoughts or discussion can indicate that which is so common it is taken for granted. Thus, in a paradoxical way, what the silences say may be understood as too important to state overtly. This reinforces

the importance of this theme.

The body and senses as an obstacle to awakening. Within YS, the whole of existence is an illusion (*maya*), making the body and sensuality an obstacle to awakening. The discussion of this theme illustrates the emphasis the sūtras placed on the theoretical and philosophical framework of the Yoga, and is again reflective Vedanta as the context for the sūtras. As stated at the outset of discussing the first YS theme, the Vedas conceptualized the body as part of *maya*, and was ultimately understood as an obstacle to realizing Yoga.

Satchidananda referred to this theme as early as his commentary on sūtra 1.2. With reference to the concept of *maya* he said, “The entire world is your own projection” (p. 5). Another quote in support of this theme stated, “we are that true seer, not the body or mind, but the witness” (p. 6). Sūtra 2.40 further reflects Vedic distaste for the body and the senses, “By purification arises disgust for one’s own body and for contact with other bodies” (p. 142). In his commentary on this sūtra, Satchidananda explained that *saucha* causes one to see the body is inescapably impure, in a state of constant filth and decay, and that the clear vision of *saucha* eliminates the desire for sense gratification. Furthermore, it highlights that sensuality and sexuality are seen as obstacles or distractions best captured by *bramacharya*, or celibacy, as one of the *yamas*.

Much of YS is devoted to articulating the relationship between desire, attachment, bondage, and suffering, and how freedom from our identification with the bodymind and our attachment to sense objects and sense gratification is the key to liberation. Satchidananda stressed how worldly action produces only fleeting happiness. He further emphasized that temporary pleasure often has negative side effects, long term consequences, and ultimately

creates attachment which results discomfort or distress when that pleasure inevitably comes to an end. Sûtra 2.15 states:

To one of discrimination, everything is painful indeed, due to its consequences: the anxiety and fear over losing what is gained; the resulting impressions left in the mind to create new cravings; and the constant conflict among the *gunas*, which control the mind.
(p. 100)

At best, the body is described in instrumental terms, as a means of achieving liberation. In his commentary on sûtra 2.13, Satchidananda stated, “The body is only a vehicle or an instrument” (p. 98). This understanding of the body as a means to an end is mirrored in his discussion of nature. Sûtra 2.21 discusses this instrumental view of the body and existence as a whole, communicating that the purpose of the entire cosmos is to provide consciousness with an experience of itself: that it exists for no other reason.

Differentiated Themes within Hatha Yoga Pradipika

Purification, practice, and psychological harm. Per HYP, purification and practice is where the path begins, as these spontaneously awaken moral behavior, whereas the imposition of morality results in conflicting internal drives and psychological harm. HYP repeatedly asserts that initially working with the body is more direct, tangible, and effective than working with the mind. This is clear in her commentary on verse 1.17, where Muktibodhananda wrote:

Asana is a specific position which opens the energy channels and psychic centres. Hatha Yoga is a process which purification and control of the body take place by restructuring pranic flows. The hatha yogis also found that by developing control of the body through asana, the mind is controlled also. Therefore, Asana practice is foremost, in hatha Yoga. When you practice asana steadiness develops. (p. 67)

This is mirrored repeatedly, particularly when *shatkarma* and *pranayama* are discussed. In the introduction, Muktibodhananda stated:

Don't worry about the mind, ignore it. Practice pranayama. By practicing pranayama, the mind is automatically conquered. However, the effects of pranayama are not so simple to manage. It creates extra heat in the body, it awakens some of the dormant centres in the brain, it can alter the production of sperm and testosterone. It lowers the respiratory rate and changes the brain wave patterns. When these changes take place, you may not be able to handle it. Therefore, hatha Yoga says that the shatkarmas must be practiced first. (p. 15)

Similarly, her commentary on verse 1.32 regarding the power of *shavasana* to, "bring up the latent impressions buried within the subconscious mind, and the mind which operates during waking consciousness relaxes and subsides" (p. 99), suggests how working with the body can indirectly impact the mind.

The second theoretical concept underpinning this theme is that subtle practices are futile when the bodymind is toxic or unbalanced. Again, as early as the introduction Muktibodhananda remarks that before meditation, the body must be purified so that mind is not sense bound. The emphasis HYP places on purification in general is also a reflection of this. In her commentary on verse 3.105, Muktibodhananda discusses that if *kundalini* is to rise, the body must be purified. On this she wrote:

Opening the door to liberation is not an easy task...the spinal pathway of sushumna has to be cleaned. The chakras have to be opened and activated. If the door is opened before this has taken place, consciousness may enter into a dark, dingy dungeon instead of a sparkling illumined palace. (p. 418)

Repeatedly, the verses and commentary of HYP suggest that subtle mental practices are ineffective without first purifying the body. On this Muktibodhananda remarked, “to transcend the body does not mean to just forget about it. You have to purify it” (p. 10).

Another theoretical facet of this theme is the Tantric assertion that you cannot control the mind with the mind. On this, Muktibodhananda noted:

You can never reach the point of evolution through intellect. Intellect becomes a barrier to spiritual awakening, and we have to find a powerful means of transcending it. Hatha Yoga is most effective because you are working on the prana and bypassing the mind. (pp. 16–17)

In her discussion of verse 3.76, Muktibodhananda explained:

There are innumerable techniques which can be practiced in the path of self-realization but many involve either forced mental concentration or sensual restrictions...Tantra approaches the problem of higher experience by being a friend of the mind and not an enemy. (p. 360)

This concept of befriending the mind leads well into the last theoretical pillar of the first theme unique to HYP.

Tantric Yoga asserts that disciplined living in accordance with moral principles should arise from genuine desire. Many of the verses and subsequent commentary warn that imposing an ethical code of conduct only intensifies internal conflict and results in psychological consequences. In the introduction, Muktibodhananda explained that discipline requires a certain quality of mind, and that trying to impose discipline without achieving this quality of mind creates splitting, conflicting, or competing internal drives. This is reminiscent of the internal conflict between Freud’s id, ego, and superego. Later in that passage Muktibodhananda asserted

that battling the mind creates animosity toward the self, and suggested that the fallout can manifest as anxiety, shame, and defeat. This is why the *yama* and *niyama* are not given attention within Tantric Yoga, and why *vajroli*, *sahajoli*, and *amaroli* are practiced as preparation for *maithuna*. In her commentary on *yama* and *niyama* in verse 1.16 Muktibodhananda wrote:

In this day and age, too many problems arise if an aspirant comes into direct confrontation with his mind at the beginning of his spiritual quest. It is like running from a den of lions into a cage of tigers. (p. 56)

Instead of hard and fast rules, Muktibodhananda suggests the *yama* and *niyama* be viewed as guiding principles or placeholders that mark stages of progress achieved as a byproduct of practice.

The body and senses as a vessel for awakening. Per HYP, the whole of existence is an expression of unified consciousness and thus the body is sacred and sensuality can support awakening. Unlike the Vedic perspective prevalent in YS that the body is an obstacle and the senses are a barrier or distraction, the Tantric influence in HYP describes the body as sacred. Tantric theory asserts that when utilized appropriately embodied sensuality can be a tool for transcendence. In both the introduction, and towards the end of chapter two, Muktibodhananda discussed how Tantra was maligned by puritanism because it does not shame or disavow the body. In her commentary on the first practice of *amaroli* described in verse 3.96, she wrote:

It is not possible to overcome mental conditioning about urine just by thinking intellectually. However, the practice of *amaroli* rapidly dissolves subconscious blockages. If you feel that your own urine is impure, it betrays your deep subconscious belief about your own body and its origin. Subconsciously, you have inherited the conviction that your body is impure. This deep rooted defect must be eradicated. (p. 397)

While *amaroli* is an esoteric practice done only after extensive purification through *asana*, *shatkarma*, and *pranayama*, it is a vivid example of Tantric Yoga's radical acceptance of the body and its natural processes.

The attitude towards sexuality is the most overt example of bodily acceptance. Tantra does not require abstinence, but rather developed sexual practices to channel the impulse, direct the energy, and utilize it for awakening rather than for simple sense indulgence. In her commentary on verse 3.103, on the practice of *vajroli* as preparation for *maithuna*, Muktibodhananda stated:

This important sloka states a basic concept of Tantra that contradicts and shatters puritanical ideals. The very idea that the ultimate experience can unfold through sensual experience is not one that many people in the last few centuries and even earlier have been able to accept. Some commentaries on hatha Yoga texts refuse to accept this as a part of the science of Yoga and completely omit the slokas pertaining to *vajroli* and *maithuna*, yogic intercourse, from the original text stating that they are obscure and repugnant practices followed by only those yogis who lack the willpower to reach their goal otherwise. However, according to Tantra, *bhoga* (or sensual involvement) can be the means to Yoga. (p. 412)

Muktibodhananda clarified that a *brahmachari* (monk) in Tantra is not one who abstains, but one who preserves. This refers to the preservation of seminal fluid, female ejaculate, and ova. This refers not to the harvesting or storing of eggs or seminal fluid, but to the concept that through very complex and specific practices, a *yogi* is able to prevent ejaculation during intercourse or the release of ovum from the ovaries, and redirect that energy to transform one's psychology. Instead of seeking only pleasure through orgasm, the *yogi* directs the power of climax up the

spine to support awakening. This ability to direct the flow of *prana* up the central channels is what HYP asserts is mastered through the practice of *vajroli*. Later in this passage,

Muktibodhananda described the awakening power of *maithuna* when she said:

Mooladhara chakra is the seat of Shakti and sahasrara is the abode of consciousness, Shiva. During maithuna, mooladhara is stimulated so that the kundalini shakti can rise to sahasrara. Even if it fails to reach sahasrara it will still awaken dormant centres of perception because each of the ascending chakras is directly connected to specific centres of experience in the brain. This is one path leading to the expansion of consciousness.
(p. 413)

While not recommending promiscuity, the verses and commentary in HYP certainly suggest that sex can be meditative, and has the power to “concentrate and captivate the mind” (p. 372).

Historically, women have often been associated with the body, blamed for inciting sexual desire in men (Griffin, 1978), and excluded from traditions like Yoga for this reason (Lipski, 1993). Thus, given its radical acceptance of the body, it is not surprising that Tantra is more widely accepting of female practitioners than many other branches of Yoga, elevating Yoginis to positions of power equal to their male counterparts. The respect for women is reflected in Tantric theory as well. In her commentary on verse 3.102, Muktibodhananda stated:

Whereas a man is bound to the grosser dimensions of awareness by his instincts and passions, which cause his body to produce and shed spermatozoa within the semen, the woman is bound to physical consciousness by the menstrual cycle. A yogini who withdraws (through the practice of *vajroli*) the bindu (ovum) overcomes this bondage. She experiences the awakening of a higher energy force within her body and her consciousness effortlessly expands into transpersonal awareness. This occurs very

readily because a woman can intuit the nature of higher consciousness and understands the hidden power of underlying acceptance and surrender, whereas for a man the barrier of personal ego many times proves insurmountable. (p. 410)

This inclusive language is mirrored not only in the commentary, but in the verse itself. Later in the same passage, Muktibodhananda remarked:

Siddhis manifest more easily to a woman because her intuitive faculties are by nature more highly evolved. She has actually always been aware of them in a rudimentary, dormant form. A woman is more aware of her own subconscious mind and that of others and if she can withdraw the bidnu by vajoroli, the individual consciousness very easily moves into the universal mind space (chidakash), and the attitude of khichari mudra spontaneously occurs. (p. 411)

Remaining Questions from the Yoga Sûtras

In keeping with Lord (2014) this section addresses questions that remain unanswered by the source text itself, myself as the interpreter, and the immediate context (foregrounded assumptions). These quandaries can be understood in the terms of relational psychoanalysis as unformulated experience (Stern, 2010). Unformulated experience might be described as dissociated experience, a vague knowing or sense that is barely recognizable, but not conscious enough to find language for. Seemingly unanswerable questions may in fact be questions where the answer has been dissociated due to unrecognized prejudice. These answers are often only available through reflection on our participation in enactments or unconscious practices. What follows is a discussion of the context and importance of each question.

I begin by discussing aspects of the text that I struggled with, or concepts that appeared to move against the grain, as these were the moments that precipitated the generation of a question.

Philosophic hermeneutics gives special attention to these moments as signals of conflict between our existing moral understandings and ontological assumptions, and the messages from the text. I first noticed this friction when I observed my response to the depiction of the Yogic tradition as absolute, universal, and ahistorical. Yoga is presented as tradition that was transmitted through realized persons, individuals who have transcended their limited culturally and historically bound bodymind, and thus the tradition has not been influenced by these conditional factors. This concept comes up against my belief in the hermeneutic tenant, that all systems of understanding reflect the culture and era in which they were developed, that human traditions are inescapably conditional, incomplete, and in a process of constant refinement. I experienced no conflict considering the phenomenon of Yoga universal; I can conceive of shared human experience or potential, but my philosophical assumptions lead me to believe that how we understand, explain, or indoctrinate others into that experience or potential is always and already limited by the culture and era in which this takes place. When articulating the value of practice over theory, of experience over intellect, Satchidananda explained that anything that comes from the mind is conditional, but the Yoga tradition is presented as having transcended these conditions, as being beyond the mind. A close friend of mine once said to me that integrity cannot be possessed and, at best, we engage in an unceasing attempt to align our actions with our values. Similarly, the truth is something we talk around, point at, reach toward. To believe we possess the truth risks arrogance, righteousness, and rigidity. The tradition of Yoga as universal truth evokes fear in me about the danger of intellectual certainty to deafen a tradition to critical feedback and to stagnate reflexive thought and dialogue.

In response to what initially appeared to be a lack of evidence to support the extraordinary claims of Patanjali and Satchidananda I first felt doubt, followed by guilt in

response to my doubt. Conversely, during my first reading of this text in 2007 I took the sūtras as absolute truth without question, dismissing inkling doubt as ego, or the mind's fear of losing control and being rendered mute through practice. Now, I clearly see this doubt as a combination of my having developed the capacity for critical thinking and as a result of social conditioning with regard to the doctrine of objectivity. I can identify the source of my guilt as rooted in the more recently introduced hermeneutic understanding that objective truth is theoretically impossible (Cushman, 2013a). This clarity incited curiosity about alternative means of obtaining proof or rigorous methods of investigation indigenous to places other than the U.S. This analysis revealed subjective experimentation (exposing one's own bodymind to varied inquests), direct experience, study of scripture/relevant literature, and the guidance of one's *guru* as the primary means of Yogic inquiry and verification.

Unsurprisingly, I had mixed responses to the authority given to the *guru*. Satchidananda made repeated mention of the *guru*'s import, whose presence signals one's readiness for practice, who is the source of one's *mantra*, and who offers guidance that ensures successful and efficient practice. While personal experience with religious corruption spurred fears about vulnerable individuals who easily become subservient and the potential for abuse of power, I value the traditional role of the *guru* as a gatekeeper that keeps the tradition intact, protects the health and wellbeing of the student, and prevents the misuse of power gained through practice.

Yoga was originally transmitted directly from *guru* to disciple. The *guru* observed the progress of their disciples closely, holding them accountable with regard to the moral integrity of their thoughts and deeds. Vows of renunciation typically signified devotion to the path of Yoga and the initiation of serious practice. In the tradition I participated in, only after undertaking significant service and austerity would one receive the title of *swami* and adorn ochre colored

robes. Under the guidance of the *guru*, the *swamis* were permitted to instruct on aspects of the tradition where they had significant experience and understanding. As *swamis* became purer through practice and service, the robes they adorned became progressively darker and darker shades of ochre, symbolic of the ego being burned away. While the color of the robes or exact stages of progress vary from lineage to lineage, only the *guru* is considered qualified to supervise progress, select, instruct, and assign the appropriate practices at the appropriate time, and confirm whether her *swamis* have become realized themselves.

The role of *guru* is one of the ways the tradition of Yoga has been altered since its introduction into the U.S. Yoga was met with what Cushman (1995) called the Empty Self, or the absence of cultural identity left by a paucity of moral discourse in the life of U.S. citizens. The 1960s saw growing disenchantment with the status quo, idealist escapism, and hunger for a new social vision and description of human potential that gave the tradition of Yoga an exotic allure. The concept of liberation, though likely misunderstood through a hyper-individualistic cultural lens, held a particular appeal. Furthermore, Satchidananda's opening talk at Woodstock Music Festival fueled a new social trend where U.S. citizens flocked to the East to study under the tutelage of Indian *guru*'s or observe the asceticism of wandering mystics. Teachings and practices of Yoga that made their way back to the U.S. were not transmitted verbatim, but through an interpretive lens of the student, who determined what parts of the tradition were heard and then later communicated to others.

In philosophic hermeneutics, our prejudices or pre-understandings guide and inform us as we navigate novel territory and attempt to make sense of what we encounter. This describes how culturally syntonic aspects of the Yoga tradition were easily adopted while individuals failed to perceive, understand, or take to heart moral and philosophical tenants that challenge dominant

cultural values or undermine socioeconomic infrastructure in the U.S. For example, plucked from the moral framework of Yoga, the concept of *maya* can be misunderstood as supporting the cognitive agenda in the U.S. The cognitive agenda states that an individual's problems are not caused by their relationships or their status or access within their social political world, but by problematic thinking (Sampson, 1981). The decontextualized concept of *maya* can be used to reinforce this stance, as the root of suffering is explained as simple mental distortion.

Conversely, the moral framework of Yoga blatantly challenges the values inherent to neoliberalism in the U.S. Neoliberalism is a political ideology held up by the values of cognitive ideology and instrumentalism and can be observed in the following aspects of U.S. society: deregulated capitalist economy, privatized public resources, cuts to social services, legislature that prioritizes corporate benefit, and dissociation of the cultural, environmental, economic, and political fallout (Brown, 2003; as cited in Sugarman, 2015). Instrumentalism in the U.S. impacts identity formation, turning the subject into a collection of skills and traits and life into an unceasing cost benefit analysis (Fowers, 2010). Neoliberalism in the U.S. applies the language of free market enterprise to communicate which traits would be advantageous for the individual to develop, such as initiative, self-reliance, and self-mastery (Sugarman, 2015). The entitlement in a neoliberal society with regard to decisive autonomy helps to maintain the status quo through social practices where enterprising individuals are unknowingly corralled through narrow pathways for exercising agency and self-determination. The obsession with self-interest and risk taking is compounded by the cognitive agenda, where circumstances are viewed as the result of personal choice rather than the outcome of disparities in access to social, economic, or political opportunities and resources (Sugarman, 2015).

A final aspect of the neoliberal U.S. relevant to this discussion is the impact of a highly competitive and exploitative economy and booming entertainment industry on individuals free-time and the value assigned to building character and relationship. Layton (2010; 2013) argued that life in the U.S. has become fragmented and instrumental, destabilizing career and relationship, and interrupting the coherent lived experience requisite for the development of character. The neoliberal self-concept in the U.S. more closely resembles a disjointed list of bulleted skills and qualities than a psychologically nourishing narrative (Sugarman, 2015). Furthermore, impoverished time and instrumental assessment of self and other undermine the patience, loyalty, and commitment required for the development of a healthy relationship to self and other (Sugarman, 2015).

Against this backdrop, the conflict between dominant values in the neoliberal U.S. and the moral framework of Yoga begin to emerge. The first clear opposition is tied to the emphasis on individuality, autonomy, and free will in the U.S. Yogic theory asserts that it is the very identification with our individual bodymind that causes suffering, and the exercise of agency and self-determination provides us with only fleeting enjoyment at best.

This also explains why the dissemination of Yoga in the U.S. deviated away from the relationship between *guru* and disciple. The subjugation of one's will to that of the teacher clash with the entitled hyper-individualism of the U.S., as would the notion of restricted access to cultural knowledge. The fifth *niyama*, *isvara pranidhanani*, or surrendering our identification with the bodymind and our love affair with sense indulgence likely threatens a core belief about the good and foundational component of U.S. cultural ideology.

Misunderstanding the difference between fleeting enjoyment and lasting bliss would easily cause one to understand the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* as

limiting personal freedom, restricting the pursuit of sense gratification, and asking the individual to surrender convenience, comfort, and security. This would be particularly threatening for someone in the U.S., as the pursuit of these privileges are promoted as essential to the experience of a good life, and are thus highly desirable. For example, while on the surface *asteya* and *aparigraha* may appear relatively simple to adhere to, Yogic interpretations complicate the practice of these tenants. When considering that not sharing or taking more than you need is considered a form of theft motivated by greed, the right to pursue limitless wealth and to hoard resources obtained for personal use make practicing *asteya* and *aparigraha* in the U.S. a significant challenge. The concept of *ahimsa* would call the meat and dairy industries into question, challenge the environmental impact of modern business practices, and highlight disparities in access to opportunities and resources (Klein, 2007). The hyper-individualistic facet of U.S. culture is evident in the predominant reference to self-compassion or non-violence toward the self when teachers discuss *ahimsa* in a typical Yoga class. Furthermore, the Yoga Alliance recently link added their website an article on how to recognize and report sexual misconduct (Yoga Alliance, n.d.). This is evidence that even in moderation, Yoga students and teachers in the U.S. are struggling to practice *brahmacharya*.

With regard to the remaining *niyama*, *saucha* and *santosha* would call into question the value of the entertainment industry, and challenge the endless pursuit of sense gratification as a core facet of the dominant diet and lifestyle practices in the U.S. While *tapas* and *svadhyaya* may be the most culturally syntonic aspects of the *niyamas*, the driving motivation of ascetic denial/bodily manipulation to obtain recognition, admiration, or social capital via the physical expression of self-mastery and aesthetic appeal run counter to the Yogic value of *isvara pranidhanani*, or surrendering the ego. The popularity of Hatha Yoga in the U.S., which permits

practice without rigid adherence to the prescriptions and proscriptions of Vedic Yoga, makes sense in this context.

Despite the lectures and many translations of scripture and literature available in the U.S. from popular *gurus* like Satchidananda, Jois, and Iyengar, much of the Yogic tradition remains invisible. Specifically, the moral and philosophical aim of the Yoga is either presented as an abstract ideal impossible to adhere to strictly in modern life, or it is dissociated entirely. That Yoga is understood in the U.S. as comprised of one to four of the eight limbs is evidence of this. Most instructors teach and practice only the *asanas*, some include *pranayama*, far fewer integrate *dharana*, and those who make brief and infrequent mention of the *yamas*, *niyamas*, or other philosophical tenants rarely hold themselves or their students accountable in any strict sense. This is compounded by the lack of supervision or standards of fidelity in the U.S.

I make these assertions based on my depth of experience learning, practicing, and teaching Yoga in both India and the U.S., and admit to struggling with fidelity to the tradition myself. Before participating in a teacher training I researched teachers, studios, and certifications, and selected only those that offered the comprehensive training that sought to convey the tradition as a whole. While I have completed trainings that included an overview of the history of the Yogic tradition, touched on esoteric theory regarding the different *koshas*, the science of *prana*, the *nadis*, and the *chakras*, as well significant reading, discourse, and instruction on the practical application of all eight limbs, I was never expected to demonstrate that I had retained the knowledge, mastered any practice, or maintained fidelity with this knowledge in my teaching, or with the prescriptions and proscriptions of the moral framework. In fact, the only competency I was asked to demonstrate was my ability to sequence postures together to construct different types of Yoga classes and instruct those classes with precision and

confidence. While introducing philosophical concepts at the start of class, weaving them into our sequencing, and giving examples that assisted with deepening into the practice itself or offered perspective on lived experience was encouraged, we were not responsible for gauging what was understood by the students. Our limited knowledge, experience, and awareness did not prepare us to understand or monitor the impact of classes we created on a diverse student population. Furthermore, to practice at the studios where I have taught, students are required to sign a waiver assuming responsibility for their own health and safety, relieving teachers of liability. It is also noteworthy to compare this with the credentialing process for psychologists in the U.S. Along with years of college, graduate training, predoctoral internship, post-doctoral work, and residencies, psychologists also complete competency exams, licensing exams, and, in some cases, board certification, in addition to the requirement for obtaining certain continuing education credits. In order to work with patients independently, psychologists have to demonstrate competence in a variety of domains, interventions, and populations. This stands in an interesting contrast to the ways in which Yoga training is devalued in the West, wherein Yoga instructors are generally only asked to demonstrate competence in a relatively minor aspect of the Yogic tradition.

Deviations in how Yoga is understood and disseminated in the U.S. are undoubtedly related to the broad context neoliberal economics. Yoga is most widely available to U.S. citizens through commercial settings, and the nature of these settings impacts the structure and content of classes, trainings, and standards for certification. Athletic clubs and gyms have strict prohibitions against the inclusion of moral or philosophical aspects of the tradition, and often restrict classes to a concrete sequence of postures. This presents Yoga as a purely aerobic or callisthenic practice, avoiding conflicts with customers by remaining congruent with the body

and beauty centered values of gym culture, and also by avoiding the potentially controversial spiritual and philosophical aspects of Yoga. Broadly, Yoga is diluted for mass consumption.

While some Yoga studios include minimal chanting, breathing exercises, occasional concentration practices, and brief references to the philosophy or moral framework of Yoga, they face unique economic challenges. While athletic clubs and gyms offer a variety of machines, classes, personal trainers, and services, Yoga studios have to maintain diversity in the skill level, classes, style of teaching, and type of workshops available in order to remain desirable.

Satchidananda linked the pressure to offer novel classes with the expectation and attachment created by teaching Yoga for money. Studios often seek to maximize class size, shifting dramatically away from individualized instruction, as well as to supplement income from classes and membership fees by selling workout attire, mats, props, jewelry, and more. This materialism conflicts with the values of *asteya* and *aparigraha*. While some *gurus* like Yogananda and Satchidananda established *ashrams* (spiritual centers) where Yoga classes are free for residents, visitors have to pay for food and lodging and those who come to receive certification have to pay tuition for their training. Further, training teachers for money, regardless of the context, changes the standard for who is given permission to teach. Paying to participate in a teacher training entitles students to certification upon completion. Certification requirements mostly include being physically present during training hours, demonstrating the ability to lead students through a sequence of postures, occasionally reading and writing assignments, and, of course, payment. Instead of being granted permission to teach based on experience, understanding, and merit, obtaining the title of teacher is now more closely linked to being a confident speaker, literacy, availability of time, and socioeconomic advantage. These are just some effects of Yoga having been commodified.

If you accept the hermeneutic principle that we rely on previously learned moral understandings and ontological assumptions to decipher traditions of the other, then it follows that what teachers in the U.S. present to their students as the moral and philosophical aim of Yoga is limited to the range of their vision. This spurred the following series of questions: Are the moral understandings and ontological assumptions of students and teachers in the U.S. an impediment to conceiving of bliss beyond the senses, of a Self beyond the bodymind? How do the values of neoliberalism in the U.S. sap motivation for renunciation? Is the realization of Yoga desirable to students and teachers in the U.S.?

This critique is not meant to minimize or ignore those students and teachers in the U.S. for whom the phenomenon of Yoga as the aim of practice is an intention held and reached for with varying degrees of intensity. Instead, this section is an attempt to make visible the neoliberal values that corrupt the tradition and the realization of Yoga. The values of neoliberalism in the U.S. are so commonplace that they remain widely unrecognized. What remains unarticulated is left so because it so intricately woven into all aspects of life that it becomes an assumption too important to say. While the phenomenon of Yoga is still referenced in classes and trainings, the silent individualistic and neoliberal values in the U.S. are responsible for how the tradition is understood, what concepts and practices are selected for dissemination, what language is used to illustrate concepts, and the infrastructure of learning and teaching.

Yoga as the permanent experience of being unified consciousness has a dual function as an endemic check on the ego. This is highlighted in the subtheme about the ego: We are all responsible for both the impact of our actions on the whole, and the exercise of self-discipline to minimize harm and maximize harmony. In the U.S., without this as the central aim of practice, what is being communicated to students amounts to the instrumental ways Yoga can enhance the

ego.

Evidence of this can be seen in advertisements for classes, workshops, trainings, and studios, where offerings are primarily for physical and psychological relief, rather than realization. When writing this section I obtained a copy of the *Yoga Journal* from June 2018. This issue included articles on Yoga practices to help reduce stress, improve health, increase flexibility, stability, and strength, boost vitality, build compassion, and experience joy. Essentially this communicates that Yoga is an instrumental tool to improve an individual's life. Authors frequently remarked on the benefits of Yoga for weight loss, increased muscle tone, and as a means to counteract the signs of aging. Advertisements for clothes and beauty products littered the pages. The main article on the cover featured an interview with a teacher who focuses on how to manage frustration, maintain self-compassion, and build willpower to execute choices that give an individual increased life satisfaction (Carter, 2018). This represents a classic example of how the values of neoliberalism are enacted. An article on Yoga to "open the heart again after grief" (Copersino, 2018, pp. 61–65) and a promotion for "Yoga for Autism" reflect the more recent integration of Yoga into the field of psychology. One article discussed 18 instrumental benefits of practice, including Yoga's ability to: boost immunity, reduce inflammation, gain self-control, improve social and speaking skills, better manage stress, enhance working memory, lower blood pressure, improve motor function and balance, boost mood and confidence, achieve better overall brain health, change gene activity, support fertility, build bone mass (even during aging), improve body image, slow aging, increase pain tolerance, and strengthen muscles (Risher, 2018). Lastly, an editorial with no author listed titled "The Dharma Talk," drew from the writing of a Buddhist nun named Pema Chodron on the cultivation of mindfulness. This makes clear that Yoga has fallen under the umbrella of mindfulness-based

psychology. It is clear also from the content and images in this journal that many students and teachers in the U.S. are motivated to practice by a desire for personal gain, the dangers of which are mentioned repeatedly throughout YS.

The practice of postures, breathing exercises, and some of the concentration practices of Yoga provide temporary respite from the untenable felt experience of the neoliberal life in the U.S. Some of the costs of neoliberalism include character development, relational depth, and the ability to develop a cohesive and meaningful life narrative (Sugarman, 2015). Yoga in the U.S. does not teach people to recognize their cognitive, affective, and somatosensory experiences as part of an interpretive system that provides them with vital information about themselves and the world they live in. Further, U.S. Yoga does not make room to evaluate what is observed, nor does it encourage intentional response. Instead, it teaches people to tolerate cognitive, affective, and somatosensory experiences, breeding complacency. While an instrumental relationship to the body in Vedic Yoga mirrors wide spread instrumentalism in the U.S., the stark conflict between the purpose of the body as a vehicle for awakening in the Yoga tradition is dissociated. In the U.S., Yogic practices are used to enhance the body as a tool for limitless personal gain, by either heightening the senses for increased gratification or by practicing ascetic denial and bodily manipulation to obtain recognition, admiration, or social capital via the physical expression of self-mastery and aesthetic appeal. This raises the following question: Is Yoga in the U.S. proof that the first theme unique to YS is true... That fidelity with the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* is the rightful starting place for the practice of Yoga, and practice divorced from this moral framework causes harm?

I admit to a personal struggle with variations of these moral and ontological conflicts, and while attempting to answer these questions is beyond the scope of this project, they are worthy of

consideration. It is at this time that we reflect on an overarching question guiding this dissertation; What would it mean to let the moral framework of Yoga influence the tradition of psychology in the U.S.? This is discussed further via dialogue with the exemplar texts.

Remaining Questions from Hatha Yoga Pradipika

This section addresses questions that remain unanswered by the source text itself, the interpreter (myself), and the immediate context (foregrounded assumptions). These quandaries can be understood in the terms of relational psychoanalysis as unformulated experience (Stern, 2010). Unformulated experience might be described as dissociated experience, a vague knowing or sense that is barely recognizable, but not conscious enough to be linguistically articulated. Seemingly unanswerable questions may be inquiries where the answer has been dissociated due to unrecognized prejudice. These answers are often only available through reflection on our participation in enactments or unconscious practices. What follows is a discussion of the context and importance of each question.

As I engaged with the HYP source text, I continued to experience conflicting feelings about the need for a *guru*. Through internal reflection I considered whether my White privilege, in this case being unaccustomed to being denied access, played a role in my resistance to the expressed need for a *guru*, beyond my fears of systemic abuse of power. Simultaneously, I was aware of my recognition and appreciation for the role the *guru* plays as a gatekeeper, protecting the tradition of Yoga from being further decontextualized and appropriated. While I appreciated the role the *guru* plays as gatekeeper, protector, and guide for the *sadhaka*, I struggled with the intense subjugation of will and promotion of absolute obedience to the teacher promoted in HYP. A quintessential expression of this was evident in the passage on following the *guru's* instructions implicitly, “like a patient under anesthesia” (Muktibodhananda, 1993, pp. 282). This

was disturbing to me; I have benefitted from questioning the text, the paradoxical concepts, and from challenging and being challenged. Furthermore, as a previous devotee immersed in a context that elevates values such as surrender and humility, concepts like *shraddha*, or offering one's whole self with love and devotion are deeply moving to me.

Simultaneously, I am weary of concepts like *shraddha*, as I have witnessed pervasive corruption in both the religious community of my family of origin and the spiritual community in which I was personally involved. I have experienced firsthand how the giving away of personal power can result in psychological harm. Additionally, I reflected on the relationship between the absence of an overt moral framework, the increase of nuanced technical instruction, and frequent warnings about the risk of practice without adequate guidance in HYP. The heightened importance of the *guru* in HYP as compared with YS raised the following question: Did the omission of an overt moral framework in HYP increase the need for supervision and guidance, explaining its more frequent mentions throughout the text? While HYP specifically suggested that the ethical code of conduct conveyed through the *yamas* and *niyamas* would arise spontaneously, this appeared to lead to a passive and indirect communication of values.

This passive communication of values felt oddly familiar, and alerted me to its similarity to the cherished ideology of secularism in the U.S. While secularism has been beneficial in its reduction of religious persecution in the U.S., it has had the unintended effect of obscuring moral discourse. From the perspective of philosophical hermeneutics, knowledge is inescapably moral and political, and the cultural denial of this relationship leads to ambiguity and confusion that have dangerous consequences. This led to the following questions; (a) Was Hatha Yoga an example of secularism within the tradition of Tantra? Does the separation of Yoga from its moral framework within Hatha Yoga partially account for its popularity in the U.S.?, (b) How might

have this amoral presentation of Yoga facilitated the integration of Yoga into U.S. psychology?, and (c) How does an amoral dissemination of Yoga produce different results within varying cultural contexts? Admittedly, while my affinity for Tantric Yoga is undoubtedly related to my secular cultural context, it is also connected to my awareness of the harmful relationship between repression and indulgence. This raised the question: How is the relationship between repression and indulgence expressed in different cultural contexts and historical eras? And, a subsequent question; Furthermore, is the extreme and harmful expression of this relationship unique to U.S. history?

The unease I felt regarding the importance given to the *guru* in HYP was compounded by the promotion of secrecy prevalent in the text. While I understand the role secrecy plays in restraining the ego, preventing harm that comes from practicing without guidance, and protecting the tradition, I am also aware of the role secrecy plays in maintaining dysfunction and hiding abuse. Conversely, I appreciated how practitioners are encouraged to verify the validity of the practices through direct experience.

More than any other element in HYP, I struggled with the binary gendered stereotypes that frame the teachings. While Tantric Yoga is certainly more inclusive of women than other Yogic lineages, HYP remained rife with androcentrism; comprised of masculine language, the dominant use of masculine pronouns, what appeared to be an assumed masculine audience, as well as a paucity of female-specific teachings. Further, HYP presented marriage as normative, and a description of promiscuity, particularly for females, as incompatible with spirituality. I encountered significant resistance to the gendered expectations and objectification of women. A woman's beauty was presented as not for her own enjoyment, but for the sole purpose of procreation. Procreation was always discussed within the context of marriage, as well as the

notion that women lose their beauty and charm through promiscuous behavior. The assertion was also made that female promiscuity is fueled by the desire to please men and not for personal desire. This is captured in verse 3.84, which stated, “Two things hard to obtain, milk and a woman who will act according to your will” (p. 374). Here, Muktibodhananda explained that milk is a symbol for the flow of *bindu* that is retained through the retention of semen and that this verse referred to the difficulty of pairing with a Yogini who is equally as or more adept than a *yogi* at *vajroli*. I was frustrated that Muktibodhananda did not address the gendered disparity in practice as a due to the lack of encouragement or inclusion that women face in Yogic traditions. Furthermore, this verse appeared to be written for a male audience, and pointed to the view of women as property via an expressed expectation for obedience. Notably, the verses on *vajroli* (for men) and *sahajoli* (for women) assumed these practices would take place in the context of marriage. In addition, *sahajoli* was poorly described and lacked the detailed instruction that followed the verses on *vajroli*. In the final chapter, verse 4.35 stated, “The vedas, shastras, and puranas are like common women, where shambhavi is secret like a woman of good heritage” (p. 521). Here, women are not only addressed as property, but their relative value is assessed with regard to their socioeconomic status, referring to the caste system in India. I have no formulated question about these passively communicated gender disparities, stereotypes, and expectations aside from my recognition that the values which epitomize an era of Indian history come into conflict with my own.

Exemplar Themes

In this section I introduce and discuss the themes evident in all ten articles. Given the rigor of hermeneutic interpretation, and the number of articles selected, themes unique to each article were considered beyond the scope of this work and excluded. Following the articulation

and discussion of shared themes is a brief discussion of questions raised but unanswered by the text, the interpreter (myself), or the immediate context (foregrounded assumptions). While unanswered, these questions are not only important to consider, they open up the possibility for novel understanding to emerge. This is concluded by a summary of the findings.

Self, illnesses, healers, and healing technologies in the neoliberal U.S. Cushman (1995) described the way cultural values are expressed through ever evolving constellations of self, illnesses, healers, and technologies. He explained that these constellations reflect and reinforce the moral and epistemological assumptions of the era in which they are embedded. He wrote:

I would like to suggest that we use four signposts to interpret particular eras and cultures — according to historical and cultural judgments indigenous to each era and culture: (1) the predominant configuration of the self of a particular cultural or historical “clearing”; (2) the illnesses with which that self was characteristically afflicted; (3) the institutions or officials most responsible for healing those illnesses; and (4) the technologies that the particular institutions or practitioners have used in order to heal that self’s characteristic illnesses. (p. 25)

To support the analysis of the meaning and value of Yoga as discussed by U.S. psychologists in the exemplars, it is essential to understand the authors, the texts, and the interpretations they include as representative of the current constellation of self, illnesses, healers, and technologies in the U.S. This, in turn, requires a discussion neoliberalism in greater depth. Sugarman (2015) asserted that neoliberalism has radically altered identity, morality, and relational life in the U.S.

Neoliberalism. Sugarman (2015) used Foucault’s concept of governmentality to unveil the prescriptive and proscriptive influence of neoliberalism on identity. Governmentality refers

to the power of sociopolitical institutions to monitor and shape the thoughts, feelings, behavior, and self-concept of individuals. Sugarman (2015) stated, “In neoliberalism, the technologies of the market work as mechanisms through which persons are constituted as free, enterprising individuals” (p. 5). Here, economic language is used to communicate that qualities such as initiative, self-reliance, and self-mastery are considered culturally desirable. Harrist and Richardson (2014) cited the work of Erich Fromm to express similar concerns regarding the impact of economic institutions and practices on identity development. They wrote:

This pervasive modern market has a profound effect on social character and emotional well-being over time. A wide-spread “personality market” develops in which both professionals and laborers greatly depend, for their material survival and success, on a capricious kind of personal acceptance rather than on traditional use value or ethical qualities. More and more one experiences oneself as a “commodity.” More precisely, one experiences oneself simultaneously as the seller and the commodity to be sold. Increasingly one’s self-esteem depends on conditions beyond ones’ control. The result is “shaky self-esteem,” a constant “need of confirmation by others”, feelings of “helplessness, insecurity, and inferiority”, and feelings of “depersonalization, emptiness, and meaninglessness. (p. 8)

Similarly, Sugarman (2015) remarked that at the core of neoliberalism is an instrumental conceptualization of personhood. He explained that, “In neoliberalism, people own themselves as if they are entrepreneurs of a business. They conceive of themselves as a set of assets — skills and attributes — to be managed, maintained, developed, and treated as ventures in which to invest” (p. 5). Self-concept in a neoliberal society might be understood as a resume, vitae, or portfolio; a collection of personal and professional accomplishments that is continually updated

and diversified as individuals refine the quality, performance, and productivity of their multiple selves. Moreover, Sugarman (2015) asserted that in response to a rapidly shifting free market, short-sighted economic practices and policies now require both professionals and laborers to adapt to unpredictable change, multitask, and absorb additional work after sudden layoffs. He explained how this corrodes character, as one's vocation is no longer something that is developed and honed over time, informing one's life narrative and identity. He argued:

In lives composed of fragments, episodes, chameleon values, and where career is no longer a meaningful concept, how does one make and maintain the long-term commitments required for people to form their characters into sustained narratives? Life narratives are not merely registers of events. They bestow a temporal logic and coherence – ordering the progress of life in time. (p. 9)

Here, Sugarman (2015) articulates how the experience of living in the neoliberal U.S. results in a piecemeal sense of self and life.

Sugarman (2015) further highlights how identity in the neoliberal U.S. gets entangled with an entitled sense of personal freedom, and how this obfuscates the politics of oppression. He wrote:

The idea of choice is connected intimately with our understanding of ourselves as free, autonomous actors, capable of choosing rationally in ways that will bring about our self-chosen ends. We have become enraptured by the idea that more choice means more individual freedom. (p. 6)

He explained how neoliberal government presents an abundance of forced choices, where opting out limits access. He stated, "Our choices are preconfigured to preclude more fundamental choices" (p. 6). Sugarman (2015) also explained that we are so accustomed to the sociopolitical

practices and institutions that delineate which choices are available to us that we rarely notice the predetermined nature of these options. We believe ourselves to be guided only by our unique desires and preferences, but in reality, even our interests and cravings are subject to the forces of neoliberal politics. Goodman (2016) wrote, “In the absence of resources, new tolerances and even preferences form around what is available. One’s consciousness does not hold out for higher quality possibilities...appetites adapt” (p. 10). Dwindling social services and public resources, as well as emphasis placed on risk, choice, autonomy, and self-reliance makes individuals solely responsible for failure. Conversely, the understanding that circumstances are predominantly the result of social, political, and economic access is increasingly dissociated. Thus, neoliberalism operates insidiously, promoting social practices that turn individuals into enterprising agents that are corralled through narrow pathways for exercising agency and self-determination.

Regarding the way our values have been radically altered by neoliberalism, Sugarman (2015) wrote, “Neoliberalism has redefined our notions of identity and personal fulfillment – what matters to us, what we care about, what guides our sense of right and wrong, better and worse, appropriate and inappropriate” (p. 11). The moral losses associated with neoliberal instrumentalism degrade both identity and relationship. The effect of neoliberalism on our relational life is visible in the cultural shift from a constitutive to an instrumental world view. Fowers (2010) described the effect of instrumentalism on relationships, where every person and relationship becomes a tool available for use. Citing Binkley’s 2013 analysis, Sugarman (2015) described how individuals now conduct internal cost-benefit analysis to determine the relative value of their relationships and undermining security, loyalty, and commitment. He noted:

Relationships are reduced to means-ends calculations, and pursued solely for self-interest and emotional self-optimization. Acts of love, friendship, benevolence, and generosity are valued to the extent they increase individuals' social capital. Even our most intimate relationships are interpreted as assets and liabilities. And, in the competitive social market where flexibility and mobility are prized, are best engaged as short-term contracts in which we might even withhold our deepest feelings for fear of their being used against us. Flexible capitalism demands a high degree of mobility, and a willingness to exit relationships that are no longer profitable. The context of neoliberalism seems to dissolve the capacity to respect and cherish others, especially with the kind of loyalty and commitment that Sennett (1998) insists is disappearing from the list of human virtues.

(p. 16)

In the context of neoliberal U.S., the value previously attributed to intimacy, commitment, and life-long relational bonds has been lost as a new version of the self, with new values takes shape (Sugarman, 2015).

The multiple shallow self. The self that emerges in the clearing of a neoliberal U.S. is multiple and shallow; diversified, manipulated, and projected to be competitive in an environment where circumstances and opportunities are rapidly shifting (Cushman, 2013c; Sugarman, 2015). Against the backdrop of this neoliberal self, the value placed on visibility and recognition make sense. Cushman (2013c) described the values and drives of this new self:

...the multiple flattened self is driven by a powerful imperative to develop and present various selves for public viewing, offering them according to the social needs of the moment. A person is thought to “morph” naturally and unproblematically from one self to another as the occasion dictates. (p. 3)

Like a number of authors (Sugarman, 2015; Harrist & Richardson, 2014), Cushman linked this multiple shallow self to the electronic age and the advance of both technology and social media. He wrote, “These selves, of course, are created and accessorized by partaking of the avalanche of consumer products, especially online electronic goods and services, that are omnipresent in American society today” (p. 3). To distinguish the multiple shallow self against the “empty self” that characterized the post-World War II era in the U.S. (Cushman, 1995), Sugarman (2015) wrote:

Multiple selves, by comparison with their predecessor, are less complex and conflicted – untroubled by authenticity and mysteries of personal depth. But what does concern them is visibility and recognition. Generation Y (the Millennials) don’t aspire to see the world’s great religious shrines to witness the awe or reverence inspired by worship of the divine, but instead, they build shrines to themselves on Facebook or other social media sites in acts of self-worship, so that an audience of nameless others can know of them – know that I exist, know that my life matters – as if posting a selfie with my freshly purchased grande triple skinny vanilla soy latte is freighted with existential or spiritual significance. Visibility and recognition once implied privileged status bestowed by inheritance or earned by achievement. Now visibility and recognition are rights and entitlements to be claimed and conferred by everyone. We are now all visibility and recognition entrepreneurs. As Stephen Marche (2012) assessed, as our on line communities become the engine of visibility and self-image, visibility and self-image become the engine of community. But social media creates networks, not communities. A network is not a community in the same way a connection is not a bond, something Facebook and social media make painfully apparent. Electronic connectivity is broad,

but shallow. It lacks loyalty and commitment. Thus, according to Marche, while we are generating and proliferating ever more novel and electronic platforms for socializing, we have less and less actual society and less and less of value to say to one another. (p. XX)

The multiple shallow self that has emerged in the context of neoliberalism, enhanced by technology and social media, has had deleterious effects on communal life in the U.S.

Illnesses, healers and techniques. Having identified the multiple shallow self that appears in clearing of the current era in U.S. history, it is important to note the collection of illnesses which afflict that self (Cushman, 1995). The fifth-edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM 5) has already catalogued and documented the varied expressions of mental illness. A discussion of neoliberal ideologies embodied in the practice of diagnosis and treatment would support our understanding of how Yoga has come to light in this context. Thus, what follows is the integration of Cushman's (1995) second, third, and fourth signposts, or the respective illnesses, healers, and technologies of the neoliberal self.

The practices and institutions of psychology reflect the culturally cherished ideologies of the era in which they are embedded. Harrist and Richardson (2014), discussed the ideologies of individualism and instrumentalism and how these compound suffering for those living in the U.S. Citing Schumaker, Harrist and Richardson (2014) described how individuals in cultures circumscribed by collectivist values have access to previously tried models to guide identity development and culturally endorsed strategies for facing internal conflict, personal loss, or moral confusion (2014). Harrist and Richardson (2014) further asserted that these facets of collectivist cultures provide a psychological safety net not present in the neoliberal U.S. These authors remarked on the psychological fallout of our commitment to individualism as a cherished ideology:

There is often a great price for the relative absence of such shared meanings and coping strategies in our kind of society. To an often impossible extent, individuals have to devise or invent answers of their own to human life's many stresses and crises of meaning. With limited experience and resources, operating in considerable emotional isolation, they have to innovate many of their own coping techniques, workable defenses, credible answers to ethical dilemmas, or convincing consoling or meaning giving philosophical or religious beliefs. Moreover, they have to cope actively and often through personal control, direct action, and confrontation with. Thus they may be saddled with excessive personal responsibility in a situation of limited resources and support a virtual recipe for chronic emotional strain and idiosyncratic, unreliable coping. Or overwhelmed and discouraged, they may withdraw into debilitating passivity and emotional deadness. (p. 8)

Harrist and Richardson are part of a movement called the Relational Turn, a movement driven by a sense of professional responsibility to identify ideologies guiding the institutions and practices of U.S. psychology and evaluate their worth when considering their logical end in the context of culture and history (Bordo, 2003; Benjamin, 2004; Cushman, 2012; Fowers, 2010; Harrist & Richardson, 2014; Layton, 2004, 2010, & 2013; Samelson, 1981; Sugarman, 2015). Samelson (1981) wrote:

These two faces of ideology paradoxically suggest that something ideological is both true and false at the same time. It is true in so far as it accurately represents the reality of a given sociohistorical era or group. It is false insofar as that truth may itself be a systematic distortion which serves the interests of some groups over others. At minimum, falseness exists whenever the given sociohistorical moment, with its particular

practices, institutions, and structures and the consciousness that derives therefrom, is reified and treated as though its forms were necessary, invariant, or natural. (p. 731)

By highlighting the use of ontological assumptions to serve the interests of the elite, Samelson's argument undermines the doctrine of objectivity. This calls into question the universalist assumptions of Western scientific research upon which the dominant institutions and widely accepted practices of U.S. psychology depend.

Currently, psychopathology is predominantly understood as constituted by mental health disorders that exist inside the self-contained individual (Cushman, 2013a). Disorders are often presented as rooted in a single, biochemical, neurological, or value-free etiology. By ignoring the sociopolitical context which gives rise to certain types of suffering, the classification of disorders by U.S. psychologists has, itself, become a kind of ideology (Bordo, 2003; Harrist & Richardson, 2014; Cushman, 1991, 1995, & 2013a). Following Samelson's (1981) two-part definition, the ideology presented in the DSM 5 is true in so much as it describes certain types of suffering that exist in the neoliberal U.S., and false in that it is presented as objective truth that serves the interests of those in power, including psychologists. Rather than being understood as cultural artifacts, diagnoses are seen as classifications that can be universally applied to describe the psychological suffering of individuals anywhere in the world at any point in history (Harrist & Richardson, 2014). This is reinforced through the use of Western scientific research methods with its claims of procedural superiority and objective findings (Gadamer, 1975; Cushman, 1991, 2013a). These findings then inform the development of manualized treatment methods that are considered internationally effective and immune to demographic diversity. Cushman (2013c) outlined the progression of these psychological practices:

Scientific psychotherapy research produced primarily by middle class Caucasians is based on a decontextual understanding of psychological problems that medicalizes political suffering and creates therapists who are true believers anxious to follow a manualized treatment regime in order to deliver a decontextualized, instrumental, technician healing to the poor. It is a healing, that parenthetically, has generated handsome profits for the corporate elite. (p. 10)

Here, Cushman (2013c) articulated the self-perpetuating circularity of illnesses, healers, techniques, and their sociopolitical context.

Instrumentalized Yoga

The practices and institutions developed to address trauma, depression, and anxiety by psychologists in the neoliberal U.S. exemplify the circular process articulated above. Harrist and Richardson (2014) discuss how Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was designed as a catch all category for the many cultural and historical expressions of trauma. Over the last few decades, a multibillion dollar industry developed around research seeking an explanation of PTSD and devising manualized, empirically-based treatment methods (Lord, 2014). Trauma theory and subsequent clinical practice shifts attention away from the social and political sources of harm, thereby allowing established institutions that perpetuate harmful practices to continue operating. Lord (2014) asserted that the conceptualization of PTSD has gained such widespread acceptance, the institutions that fund, support, and implement research and treatment so prevalent, that it has collectively become common sense, comprising what she refers to as a “trauma culture” in the neoliberal U.S.

Similarly, Harrist & Richardson (2014) noted that, “By 2005, one out of every ten Americans had a prescription for an antidepressant” (p. 1), and cited Greenberg’s critique that

U.S. psychologists pathologize despair that might otherwise be understood as an appropriate response to socio-political circumstances wrought with loss, internal and interpersonal conflict, and moral confusion. The authors highlighted Greenberg's concerns about how the practices of U.S. psychology reinforce the utility of psychotropic medications, sustain the multi-billion dollar industry surrounding psychopharmacology, thus securing profits for the corporate elite.

In a hermeneutic evaluation of Social anxiety disorder, Sugarman (2015) remarked that anxiety is “the third most common psychological disorder after depression and alcoholism” (p.12). Sugarman (2015) explained that, “an enterprise culture that places a premium on social prowess, confidence, exuberance, and initiative – characteristics needed for effective networking and self-presentation that in turn are believed necessary for success in a competitive marketplace” (p. 12) are hallmarks of lived experience in the neoliberal U.S. He noted that against this cultural and historical backdrop, social anxiety understood as pathology makes sense. Similarly, Cushman (2013c) noted, “as the deep self as become a flattened self, the experience of emptiness has shifted into anxiety. Vague and ever present anxiety or dis-ease somehow linked to loneliness and lack of belonging, moral guidance, and personal significance” (p. 5). Comparably, the rise in gambling addiction over the last decade might be an expression of the value attributed to risk in neoliberal politics. Further, recent increases in the frequency of diagnosis of addiction to video games and social media might be understood as an expression of the multiple self of neoliberal U.S., and the role of electronics, technology, and social media in the promotion or projection of these selves. How U.S. psychologists conceptualize these disorders and rationalize the growing number of individuals suffering from them obscures the negative influence of ideologies upholding neoliberal politics.

Sugarman (2015) wrote, “By pathologizing and medicalizing shyness, and locating the source of the problem within individuals, psychologists operate behind a veil of science and value neutrality. Ideological complicity is rarely addressed” (p. 12). As the officials tasked with developing healing technologies and ameliorating the suffering of the multiple shallow self, U.S. psychologists are complicit in reinforcing the circumstances that produce suffering. With regard to the implications of complicity, Cushman (2013c) wrote:

These days a rule-bound, manualized proceduralism has become increasingly influential, if not hegemonic, in psychotherapy. What does that mean about our profession, our nation, ourselves? As psychologists, it is our responsibility to understand how and why the world that produces the multiple self is also producing the proceduralism that is saturating current psychological practices and what are its moral and political consequences. (p. 8)

The healing technologies of U.S. psychology receive their credibility and recognition based on a scientific evaluation of their efficacy. Goodman (2016) expressed similar concerns regarding the importance given to Empirically Based Treatments (EBTs), particularly with the reductive language of scientific proceduralism, and the loss that accompanies this linguistic paucity. He wrote, “Different therapeutic orientations are different languages that human beings have for understanding their suffering, meaning, potential, and healing. They represent a rich and kaleidoscopically diverse set of traditions and interpretive possibilities for human experience” (p. 5). He further explained, “Language mediates, constitutes, and positions persons in experience. Language has the power to both open and close one to experience. Treatment practices and their respective languages carve out the horizons of possible experience” (p. 6).

Moreover, Goodman (2016) wrote that the language of U.S. psychotherapies is “heuristic and becomes a way of being in the world” (p. 6). Similarly, Cushman (2013c) wrote:

The concept of EBTs is not dangerous solely because it justifies a two-tiered system of care that patronizes, cheats, and uses the oppressed and the poor for its own ends...EBTs are also dangerous because they are implicated in a broad and increasingly prominent way of being that degrades and politically silences Americans in all walks of life. In various ways each of us is affected by the impoverished, instrumental, technicized understanding of human being that EBTs reflect and reproduce. (p. 1)

Goodman (2016) urged the need for the discipline to sustain a plurality of languages to frame human experience. He wrote, “As psychotherapists, it is an imperative that we understand that we are brokers of particular philosophies of life, identity, and healing” (p. 7). Here, the role of psychologists as gatekeepers or philosophers of lived experience is unveiled.

Psychologists in the U.S. are in the privileged position of defining what constitutes illness and health, what is good and not good about human being. Unfortunately, the role of our taken for granted cultural values, assumptions, and understandings in the linguistic choices that circumscribe the theories and practices of U.S. psychology are rarely evaluated. Harrist and Richardson (2014) explained how, for better or worse, psychologists’ language has the power to manifest the type of human being they describe. They contested the ontological assumptions of U.S. psychologists, pointed out that the type of mental and emotional disturbances people experience depends on their socio-political life, and quoted Watters (2010) on the impact of globalizing Western psychology’s theories and practices. Watters (2010) studied anorexia nervosa in China. He observed that the disorder initially consisted of mainly somatic symptoms

and did not include a fear of weight gain, but its manifestation mutated in the decade following the introduction of Western psychology symptomatology. He wrote:

There is now good evidence to suggest that in the process of teaching the rest of the world to think like us, we've been exporting our Western "symptom repertoire" as well. That is, we've been changing not only the treatments but also the expression of mental illness in other cultures. Indeed, a handful of mental-health disorders – depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anorexia among them – now appear to be spreading across cultures with the speed of contagious diseases. These symptom clusters are becoming the lingua franca of human suffering, replacing indigenous forms of mental illness. (p. 2)

The striking malleability of mental illness both upends the universal claims of Western psychologists and highlights how the veiled ideologies of U.S. psychology may alter both people's self-concept and self-expression. Furthermore, this also speaks to the reaching influence of U.S. psychology and supports a careful approach to how we disseminate information that could very well impact the symptom presentation of individuals worldwide due to the effect of Western psychology's system of classification. Cushman (2013a) pointed to the professional responsibility implicated by such findings when he wrote:

From a hermeneutic perspective, our job is not to take up the modern-era, scientific search for the putatively one, perfect, universally correct way to be human and the one way to treat it, but to historically situate ways of being and their corresponding healing practices and thereby explore their moral implications and political functions. (p. 4)

These findings and subsequent commentaries signal scholars and practitioners to evaluate changes in the pedagogy of our discipline in the context of neoliberalism.

Sugarman (2015) described how neoliberalism has become such an intricate part of life in the U.S. that the moral and ideological foundation of its institutions, policies, and practices feel natural and escape our vision, making alternatives difficult to imagine. This is certainly true for the field of psychology, where Sugarman asserted that, “dominant trends of psychological theorizing, research, and professional practice are contributing to a neoliberal ideological climate” (p. 4). Cushman (2013c) echoed this concern when he wrote:

...psychologists who are putatively trained to think critically and learnedly about issues of suffering and healing – are so much the product of our time and so enculturated in the professional avoidance of historical and political perspective that we cannot think our way out of the circularity of scientism and thus the pervasive influence of the multiple, flattened self. We are so constituted by an electronic, procedural, technicist world that we cannot see the wrong-headedness of these theories and practices. Therefore, we cannot help our patients, research participants, and graduate students. We cannot help them because we cannot help ourselves. We cannot see that the technicist proceduralism we inflict on them reproduces the cultural terrain that has caused their suffering in the first place. (p. 11)

This passage highlights that the scientific proceduralism used to assign value to psychotherapies does not ensure the best treatment, but rather appears to do so because of how perfectly it reflects and reproduces the cultural clearing of the neoliberal U.S. While lengthy, the intent behind describing the ideologies embedded in neoliberalism and the constellation of self, illnesses, healers, and techniques that has characterize this era in the U.S. was to provide a backdrop against which the interpretations of Yoga presented in these exemplars can be more readily

understood. What follows is a discussion of the themes and subthemes identified in the hermeneutic textual analysis of the exemplars.

Exemplar Theme One: The Culling of Yoga

To cull is to select, choose, single out, or take what is preferred and decline, refuse, reject, or discard what is considered inferior or worthless (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Christopher et al. (2014) describe how scholars of psychology often selectively appropriate theories, philosophical precepts, and practices from other traditions, dismissing the larger context of what is found valuable as superstitious, irrational, primitive, or religious. The first theme exemplified by all ten articles is this culling, or cultural appropriation, of Yoga.

The culling of Yoga by U.S. psychologists occurred in the following six step process: (a) elements of the tradition that are seen as undesirable (those parts that challenge the moral and ontological assumptions of U.S. psychology) are ignored dismissed, or dissociated, (b) concepts and practices that are considered desirable (those theories and practices that appear to mirror or reify the moral and ontological assumptions of U.S. psychology) are identified, (c) the therapeutic benefit of these decontextualized concepts and practices is evaluated using Western scientific research methods (assuming a stance of superiority by presenting culturally embedded methods of inquiry as objective and universal and findings as absolute truth), (d) Yoga is referenced, discussed, and understood by U.S. psychologists as comprised of only those concepts and practices that have been found to have therapeutic benefit, (e) constellations of these concepts and practices are combined with widely accepted treatment methods and further evaluated for their therapeutic benefit again using Western scientific research methods, and (f) once their value has been confirmed, these combinations are re-named and claimed as intellectual property through trademarking, and highly profitable tiered certification programs

are developed. The subthemes identified describe these steps in a non-linearly and comprise the discussion of this first shared theme.

All ten articles repeatedly described Yoga as a technique, practice, intervention, or therapy that included one or more of the following: a sequence of postures, breathing exercises, and meditation practices. As early as the abstract and repeatedly throughout their article, Quach, Gibler, & Mano (2016) defined Yoga as a “mindfulness based intervention” (p. 495). Goethe et al. (2016) defined Yoga as a “mind-body technique” (p. 109) in their abstract, a “mind-body intervention” (p. 109) in their introduction, and later as a “moving meditation” (p. 110) and “mind-body therapy” (p. 115) in their conclusion. Frank, Kohler, Peal, and Bose (2016) also referred to Yoga as both a “mind-body intervention” (p. 2), as well as a “complimentary therapy” (p. 2) and a “therapeutic intervention” (p. 2). Both Riley and Park’s (2015) article, and Genovese and Fondran’s (2016) piece refer to Yoga as a practice. Medina et al. (2015) called Yoga a “mind-body practice” (p. 289), while Shapiro et al. (2015) defined Yoga as a “contemplative practice” (p. 1). Pradhan et al. (2015) does not define Yoga separately from its role in the TIMBER methodology, which they explain is a “mindfulness based psychotherapy developed by the first author” (p. 125), and defined as a “scientific, evidence based, manualized intervention” (p. 129). Quach et al. (2016) also referred to Yoga as a “mindfulness-based intervention” (p. 489) and Hopkins et al. (2016) defined it as a “targeted adjunctive intervention” (p. 559). This trend was the impetus for the generation of the first shared subtheme: Yoga is defined by psychologists in the U.S. as a method and is described using instrumental terms. This is not surprising given the context of U.S. psychology, that for Yoga to be easily included into clinical practice it had to become a universally applicable method.

Once reduced to method, it follows that Yoga would be discussed in secular and

instrumental terms. In their abstract, Quach, Gibler, and Mano (2016) identified Yoga as a mindfulness-based intervention and then refer to studies that demonstrate the efficacy of these interventions to treat depression and anxiety in their introduction. Later in the same passage, the authors stated:

Mindfulness practices in school settings may function in a preventative capacity to strengthen attention, focus, and non-judgmental acceptance in youth who require such skills to succeed in academia. For example hatha Yoga has shown to be effective in improving academic performance as well as reducing stress and negative affect in youth. (p. 496)

Here, Yoga is treated as a tool intended to improve educational outcomes. In an article based on the same research, Quach et al. (2016) referenced research that suggests mindfulness based interventions improve executive and cognitive functioning, and investigated the impact of Yoga on working memory. Following this vein of research, exploring the cognitive benefits of practicing Yoga, Goethe et al. (2016) referenced a recent meta-analysis of “Yoga-cognition literature” (p. 109) which found both short- and long-term practice resulted in small to moderate improvements in cognition, sustained and selective attention, processing speed, and memory. Citing neuroscience research, they wrote, “Cross-sectional neuroimaging studies with Yoga practitioners have reported greater gray matter volume in several brain regions including the frontal lobe, largely responsible for executive processes” (p. 115). Their own research findings suggest Yoga practice is an effective tool for enhancing executive functioning by reducing stress, and discussed the potential of Yoga as a tool to sustain cognitive performance or prevent cognitive decline in older adults. Frank et al. (2016) also explored whether mental health and school performance would improve by implementing Yoga with adolescents in an inner-city

middle school. They describe the Transformative Life Skills (TLS) program as a
...manualized, universal, classroom-based program that provides students with
instruction and applied experience in using Yoga postures, breathing techniques, and
centering meditation in order to reduce stress and promote social-emotional health and
physical wellness. The intervention is secular and does not use terminology that would
be considered religious or unusual in most US public school contexts. (p. 548)

Here, the authors discuss Yoga as a tool to reduce stress and improve social, emotional, and
physical health. Further, they dismiss the larger context of Yoga as religious, affirm the value
attributed to secularism in the U.S., and imply educational settings in the U.S. would not
welcome the moral, philosophical, and theoretical context of Yoga. Shapiro et al. (2015)
reviewed literature that explored the concept of integrating “contemplative practices” (p. 1) into
childhood education, saying that contemplative practices such as Yoga “foster the development
of key self-regulation skills required for academic achievement and emotional well-being” (p. 1).
The authors go on to describe Yoga as a form of metacognition that can be used as a tool to
promote development of emotional regulation and executive functions such as self-monitoring,
discrimination, sustained attention, and perspective taking. These four articles clearly suggest
that Yoga is understood instrumentally, as tool for educational settings to improve social and
academic functioning, or as a means to reduce the cognitive decline generally associated with
aging.

Yoga is frequently discussed as an instrumental means to reduce stress and treat anxiety,
depression, and trauma. In an attempt to identify the precise mechanisms at work, Riley and
Park (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of literature that found Yoga reduces stress. They wrote,
“The ability to implement Yoga interventions to supplement current standards of care or

pharmacological treatment can be transformative, providing better ways to reduce stress and improve health” (p. 392). Here the authors are not only discussing Yoga as a tool to support psychological and physical health, but as an adjunctive tool for health care professionals to bolster the efficacy of the methodology currently in use. Similarly, after having used Bikram Yoga to successfully reduce cortisol reactivity to stress and emotional eating in women with obesity, Hopkins et al. (2016) discussed Yoga as a “targeted adjunctive intervention for stress eating” (p. 559). Based on preliminary findings that college students’ self-reported levels of both anxiety and depression decreased after a 16-week Yoga class, Genovese and Fondran (2016) discussed Yoga as a potential tool to reduce depression and anxiety. Medina et al. (2015) explored Yoga as a tool to increase distress tolerance. They asserted, “This study offers preliminary evidence for the benefits of Yoga interventions for problems characterized by elevated stress and poor affect regulation” (p. 298). A study seeking to gain empirical support for the use of TIMBER methodology as a tool to treat traumatized youth (Pradhan et al., 2015) defended the combination of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) with Yoga postures, breathing practices, and meditation. The authors asserted that, “Yoga is more effective when combined, synergistic, and targeted use of many elements is employed” (p. 127). While the authors’ brief and inaccurate reference to the limbs of Yoga does not substantiate their assertion that because these limbs are integrated in practice, that a few of them can be integrated with practices outside the tradition with an equally positive impact. The authors use three of eight limbs to create a “standardized Yoga mindfulness-based cognitive therapy” (p. 128) that they present as objective and universally applicable. On this, they remarked, “The TIMBER model is meant to be a scientific, evidence-based, manualized intervention. Although it incorporates elements from Eastern spirituality, it is not religious by nature...Being a manualized treatment,

TIMBER can be carried out in a reproducible manner” (p. 129). Here, the authors both dismiss the context of selected Yoga practices as religious, and overtly describe the clinical and academic benefit of a decontextualized and highly procedural form of Yoga.

The reductive and instrumental way Yoga is utilized leaves it susceptible to being understood in overly simplistic ways. Within the exemplars, Yoga is frequently compared with aerobics, exercise, or stretching. Not only did authors often and overtly engage in this comparison, exercise and stretching was the intervention used for control groups within a few of the Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs). Hopkins et al. (2016) wrote, “like aerobic exercise, Yoga results in sympathetic activation” (p. 559), and listed the lack of an exercise control group (rather than a waitlist control group) as a limitation of the study. Similarly, Quachet al. (2016) also listed the lack of an exercise control group as a limitation of the study. Goethe et al. (2016) used stretching as a control group, and wrote:

An RCT (Hariprasad et al., 2013) reported increases in bilateral hippocampal gray matter volume after a 6-month Yoga intervention in older adults. In the physical activity-cognition literature, experiencing novel activities (Lewis, Baldassarre, Committeri, Romani, & Corbetta, 2009) and anaerobic interventions have been shown to have unique cognitive benefits on brain structure and function. (p. 115)

While participants in the control group did not participate as planned, Genovese and Fondran (2016) used a non-Yoga exercise control group in their research design. In their literature review, Medina, Hopkins, Powers, Baird, and Smits (2015) compared programmed aerobic exercise interventions with Yoga. Further, in their discussion, the authors wrote, “without the inclusion of additional active study conditions, our study cannot make conclusions regarding the comparative effects of Yoga to traditional exercise, to psychotherapy, or to a contact control

intervention” (p. 297). The comparison and seemingly interchangeable use of Yoga with aerobic exercise suggests that psychologists in the U.S. mostly understand Yoga as a series of physical postures.

Given the role instrumentalism has played in the cultural and historical context of the United States, it is not surprising that Yoga is discussed in amoral, ahistorical, and instrumental terms. Smith (1999) articulated how the idealism of enlightenment, the belief in an ever-expanding empire, resulted in an insatiable imperialistic drive to collect and catalogue the material, intellectual, and spiritual wealth of other cultures. Gadamer (1975) explained that this same era of enlightenment gave rise to the presupposition that a meticulous application of method would safeguard against all error. The authority given to method cannot be separated from the manner in which Europeans encountered the other and understood them in instrumental terms. The scientific method and its rhetoric of objectivity has functioned primary as a mechanism of appropriation, acquisition, and the assertion of universal truth. Smith (1999) wrote:

Enlightenment provided the spirit, the impetus, the confidence, and the political and economic structures that facilitated the search for new knowledges. The project of Enlightenment is often referred to as modernity, and it is that project which is claimed to have provided the stimulus for the industrial revolution, the philosophy of liberalism, the development of disciplines in the sciences and the development of public education.

(p. 58)

The ethics of instrumentalism guided the era of enlightenment and paved the way for the practices of imperialism, playing a central role in the cultural development of academic research in the West. Fowers (2010) described the five pillars of Instrumentalism: (a) The means are

divorced from the ends; (b) Ends are subjective preferences, whereas means are strategies or tools; (c) The value of means is based solely on their efficacy; (d) Means are discarded if ineffective; and (e) Actors are independent of means. Fowers (2010) asserted that instrumentalism is pervasive in U.S. culture, inextricable from academic institutions and disciplines and perpetuated by U.S. psychologists. Sugarman (2015) described instrumentalism as applied to the individual within neoliberalism, turning a person into a collection of skills and properties to be acquired, honed, and managed. Sugarman argued that the subject has become a thing in which to invest in and insure, and described how we refine ourselves in terms of the quality of our performance and productivity. If instrumentalism shapes the identity of U.S. citizens, and is applied relationally, then it is not surprising that it guides psychologists as they encounter traditions of the other.

Subtheme one: Yoga within the context of Mindfulness Based Psychology. Eight out of ten articles repeatedly define and discuss Yoga in the context of mindfulness. Authors frequently referenced the concept of mindfulness or overtly described the clinical use of Yoga as an expression of MBP. Researchers selected techniques that fall under the MBP umbrella, such as Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), as comparable interventions in their research design and implementation. This was the drive for the first shared exemplar subtheme: Psychologists in the U.S. talk about Yoga within the context of mindfulness based psychology (MBP). For example, both Quach et al. (2016) and Quach et al. (2016) defined Yoga as a mindfulness based intervention. Their research evaluated a school-based mindfulness program where they compared Yoga to MBSR in their research design, and used the Child Acceptance and Mindfulness Measure (CAMM) to assess the impact of Yoga and MBSR within an academic setting. Similarly, Goethe et al. (2016) compared Yoga with MBSR, transcendental meditation,

and tai chi as practices that downregulate the sympathetic nervous system and the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis. In their conclusion, the authors wrote, “Awareness based behavioral interventions such as mindfulness have shown to moderate the neural-cortisol association” (p. 115). Similarly, Medina et al. (2015) referenced the source of Hatha Yoga in the, “Eastern philosophical tradition of mindfulness” (p. 289), and later explained that the hypothesis in the study that Yoga enhances cognitive flexibility and selective attention, is supported by the “the mindfulness literature” (p. 296). Riley and Park (2015) identified mindfulness as one of the psychological mechanisms that explain why Yoga reduces stress.

They wrote:

Many researchers suggest that mindfulness is a powerful link between Yoga practice and stress reduction (Dunn, 2008). Brown and Ryan (2003) define mindfulness as the state of being attentive to and aware of what is taking place in the present. Its association with Yoga practice, as well as its ability to combat stress, has been widely demonstrated (See Chiesa & Serretti, 2009, for a review). Studies suggest mindfulness is associated with measures of lower stress (Gilbert & Waltz, 2010). Yoga has been associated with higher levels of mindfulness. For example, Brisbon and Lowery (2011) found that advanced Yoga practitioners had higher levels of mindfulness (and lower levels of stress) compared to new yogis. (p. 381)

Pradhan et al. (2015) define TIMBER as an MBP comprised of CBT, standardized Yoga, and meditation developed for the treatment of PTSD. They call the integration of CBT, Yoga, and meditation a “mindfulness based grade exposure therapy” (p. 125), and identify the key features of mindfulness as “focused attention, compassion, empathy, validation, and non-judgmental attitudes” (p. 130).

Subtheme two: Language about Yoga. Hermeneutic interpretation, as mentioned, pays special attention to both the particularities of language, giving equal weight to what is not being communicated and said. Across all ten articles, Sanskrit terms are mostly absent, and even translations of terms were predominantly are inaccurately defined or omitted entirely. The terms used to define Yoga are also an example of this lack of linguistic clarity. The reductive and misleading use of the terms Yoga or Hatha Yoga to describe only a selection of postures, breathing techniques, and concentration practices is the most obvious and widespread example of this. U.S. psychologists were not the first to make poor use of these terms, as the vast majority of Yoga studios around the country make similar claims. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika, a near 600 page source text, barely scratches the surface of the depth of Hatha Yoga. While it is unreasonable for a single Yoga class to convey the breadth of understandings that comprise an entire tradition, the description of the Hatha Yoga interventions in these studies are an incomplete or inaccurate transmission of the traditions tenants and practices. The use of these terms becomes a catch-all; mindfulness is an example of this unfortunate trend. This gave rise to a third shared subtheme: The original terminology used to discuss Yoga is frequently misused, ill-defined, or left out completely.

Quach et al. (2016) and Quach et al. (2016) described their Hatha Yoga intervention in the following way:

The adolescent hatha Yoga curriculum was used with permission from Shanti Generation Yoga, created and copyrighted in 2009 by Abby Wills...Hatha Yoga sessions consisted of three parts: (a) breathing techniques, (b) Yoga poses, and (c) discussion. Participants learned a series of new Yoga poses each week as well as reviewed old poses: Creating Happiness — forward bends for flexibility (week 1); Energy Amplified — balancing and

core strengthening postures (week 2); Choosing Peace — standing poses, backbends, and forwards bends (week 3); Being Sound — twist, bend, and relax; and Voice Choice Possibility — breathe, visualize, and move. (p. 497)

This description suggests that seeking out happiness is encouraged, while the philosophy of Yoga traditionally discourages attachment to impermanent emotional states, and discusses the suffering that arises from the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain. Furthermore, the themes for each week are not aligned with the impact of poses selected. For example, balancing poses are generally associated with one-pointed concentration rather than energy amplification. Similarly, back-bending would be more appropriate in the energy amplification week, as it is vitalizing and not necessarily calming, whereas side bending, with its tonifying impact on the adrenal system, tends to result in feelings of peace and relaxation. This pairing is an example of how the misuse of terminology and practices can be misleading and create dissonance between the experience of the practitioner and the teachings they are receiving.

Goethe et al. (2016) described their Yoga intervention as comprised of postures, breathing, and meditation, explaining that instructors were, “encouraged to lead the classes like they would in a community health center or gym” (p. 111). Having led Hatha Yoga and having participated in Yoga classes at a gym, I know the politics of most athletic clubs require instructors to strip instruction of all philosophical teachings, leading Yoga like you might an aerobics class. Further, the authors used the term meditation, to describe what Yoga would call concentration practice. In traditional Yogic theory, *dharana* is preparation for meditation, a practice that includes the willful direction and re-direction of attention until it becomes one-pointed. *Dhyana* is a spontaneous state that arises as the result of having perfected the practice of *dharana*. While Pradhan et al. (2015) mentioned the terms *dharana* and *dhyana*, they used them

both to describe meditation, and made no distinction between them. In fact, all ten articles used the term meditation to describe concentration practices. While this might be a nuanced facet of Yogic theory, it is a distinction that helps the practitioner orient to the progressive stages of practice and without it the practitioner would likely struggle to interpret the meaning or significance of an already subtle and abstract experience.

As stated previously, Medina et al. (2015) incorrectly sourced Hatha Yoga in the “Eastern philosophical tradition of mindfulness” (p. 289). This is ironic, as mindfulness is not a tradition, but a concept created by Western scholars and practitioners. These authors also stated that, “hatha yoga is designed to focus on interoceptive cues and breath, during or while transitioning to challenging asanas” (p. 289). Statements like this and borrowing terms from neuropsychology like interoceptive cues to explain the purpose and process of Yoga suggests a compatibility between the two traditions that has not been established. Furthermore, the indication of the phrase “hatha yoga was designed to” (p. XX) within this sentence implies that this was the sole purpose for which Yoga was intended, which obscures the phenomenological aim of the tradition. Later in this article, the authors state, “The conjecture that Yoga enhances one’s ability to shift attention beyond the sensation of discomfort, towards other stimuli in the immediate environment, is supported by the literature” (p. 296), which they support by citing a number of relevant studies. Notably, the term “beyond” (p. XX) in this passage points to how unconscious cultural values can cause Yogic theory to be misunderstood and inaccurately described. Yogic theory clearly indicates that one of the benefits of *asana* practice is a cultivated ability to be with our discomfort without needing to react to it. It supports the practitioner to resist the temptation to avoid pain and seek pleasure. Conversely, moving beyond discomfort and focusing attention on other stimuli in the environment reflects the cultural tendency towards

dissociation and escapism in the U.S., and shows how misinterpreted Yogic theory can reinforce this tendency.

Hopkins et al. (2016) wrote that “heated hatha Yoga was selected because it aims to teach emotion regulation” (p. 559). While emotion regulation is a positive side effect of practicing Yoga, it is not a specific goal within the tradition. Similarly, Frank et al. (2016) indicate that Yoga was developed by incorporating postures, breathing techniques, and meditation in order to achieve psychological and physical benefit. Again, this obscures the phenomenological aim of the tradition, and suggests a compatibility between Yoga and U.S. psychology that has not been established. While the authors of this article recognized Yoga as a discipline rather than simply a practice, they still reduced the tradition to only three of the eight limbs. The authors further describe the Transformative Life Skills (TLS) program, as comprised of postures, breathing techniques, and discussions using “sequenced scripts to produce high-fidelity implementation” (p. 2), and boasted that TLS has the potential to be a universal method. Similarly, Pradhan et al. (2015) touted their use of “standardized yoga and meditation” (p. 125).

Yoga as universal, standardized, and employing the use of sequenced scripts runs counter to the individualized instruction described as requisite throughout both source texts.

Additionally, the authors claimed that TIMBER uses

Yoga in its entirety (all eight limbs including meditation, which are its 6th and 7th limbs, stable and easy posture, flexible use of kriya/yogic procedures, the balanced Middle Way life style, standardized meditative breathing, elements of compassion and mindfulness attitude;p. 130)

While the authors mentioned the correct number of limbs, they did not accurately define these limbs. Instead, they offered list of terms that allow for the eclectic selection and inclusion

of practices under the umbrella of Yoga. The chronic and pervasive misuse and exclusion of terms across all ten articles demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of Yoga within U.S. psychological literature. The perpetuation of this flawed understanding among psychologists in the U.S. is a reflection of professional negligence and cultural incompetence that does the discipline of U.S. psychology a disservice.

Subtheme three: Divide between instrumental and comprehensive Yoga.

Hermeneutic interpretation pays special attention to both what is and is not being communicated. From a psychodynamic perspective, silences and exclusions of particular thoughts or discussion can indicate that which is so common, that it is taken-for-granted. Thus, in a paradoxical way, what is said in the silences may be too important to state. The ontological entitlement to study and integrate selected practices while rejecting the larger context of Yoga appears to be the natural obvious, or common sense response to encountering the tradition of the other. This reveals a pattern of cultural appropriation and intellectual imperialism that is so intricately woven in to academia in the West that it is essentially invisible. This emerged as a third shared subtheme: The postures, breathing exercises, and concentration practices of Yoga are divorced from the symbolism, philosophy, values, prescribed code of conduct, extensive and nuanced body of knowledge, and overall aim of the tradition.

Most of the exemplar articles remarked on the growing interest in Yoga and the evidence supporting its instrumental benefits, no systemic investigation of the potential mechanisms at play had been conducted. Two of these ten articles focused heavily on the paucity of this research, where one of these was a meta-analysis of literature that identified two psychological and two biological mechanisms at work in Yoga (Goethe et al., 2016; Riley & Park, 2015). The authors in this article clearly states that identifying the underlying psychological, social, or

neuropsychological factors or processes that mediate the instrumental benefits of Yoga will generate widespread acceptance for the integration of Yoga into the clinical practice (Riley & Park, 2015). Riley and Park (2015) wrote that this information would allow psychologists in the U.S. to modify Yoga, targeting “the most effective components” (p. 380) of Yoga, and determining which of these best resolve specific stress-related concerns. This reveals a rejection of Yogic science and the authority given to subjective investigation and experience, as it ignores 5,000 years of systematic inquiry within the tradition. The Yogic tradition has already arrived at nuanced understandings with regard to the mechanisms and processes at work in Yoga, as well as the most effective strategies for practice. These are well described in HYP, which communicates a detailed theory of bodymind arguably far more complex than any theory of mind in U.S. psychology (Muktibodhananda, 1993). However, these indigenous explanations challenge concrete and compartmentalized understandings of human physiology and psychology fundamental to the Western medicine and neuropsychology.

The prevalent use of theory and terminology borrowed from neuropsychology to discuss the purpose and explain the efficacy of Yoga in all ten exemplars represents a passive denial of the extensive body of knowledge contained in the Yogic tradition. The implication is that these original explanations are somehow insufficient and require empirical justification.

Merriam-Webster’s first two definitions for the term empirical are: “originating in or based on observation or experience//empirical data” and “relying on experience or observation alone often without due regard for system and theory/an empirical basis for theory” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). This is noteworthy, given the weight and emphasis on validation of theory through observation and experience within the tradition of Yoga. It also points to the general dismissal of Yoga theory and philosophy within Western research practices.

No source literature on Yoga was cited within any of the exemplars. The articles did not equip the reader with information about the tradition, origin, or context for the practices being studied. Further, there is a redundant emphasis placed on the secular dissemination of Yoga (Shapiro et al., 2015; Frank et al., 2016; Pradhan et al., 2015) which suggests that the larger context of the Yogic tradition has been dismissed by psychologists in the U.S. due to religious connotations. This is reminiscent of Christopher et al.'s (2014) critique of U.S. psychology when presented as objective and universal; in which they explained that such a transcultural and transhistorical view of U.S. psychology inhibits its scholars and practitioners from understanding the indigenous psychologies of the other, such as Yogic psychology.

Subtheme four: Western research priorities. Said (1983) posed the following series of questions regarding the political nature of academic research; the inquirers and subjects of inquiry, the cultural traditions deemed worthy of inquiry, and the beneficiaries of the results of inquiry, among other questions. He asserted that by ignoring these questions, we ignore the politics of interpretation and take a stance of positional superiority.

Fowers and Richardson (1996) argued that the pretense of objective neutrality that informs the scientific method of understanding the other obfuscates the intense dissimilarity and moral conflicts inherent in the contact between cultures. Similarly, research on the effects of decontextualized practices, without an evaluation of the politics guiding inquiry, produce findings that inherently reflect the unconscious prejudices of those involved in the study. In the U.S., researchers in the field of psychology rarely ask these questions, thus halting the development of disciplinary reflexivity. Instead, the ideology supporting the Western scientific research methods, whether qualitative or quantitative, is taken for granted as the sole means to discerning objective truth. Awareness of this trend led to the formation of a fourth subtheme:

Western scientific research methods are given the authority to determine the relevance, efficacy, and value of selected Yogic practices.

Eight out of ten exemplars reported on the findings from RCTs. Of the remaining two articles, one was a meta-analysis of the findings from other RCTs that used quantitative methods to evaluate the mechanism by which Yoga reduces stress, and the last was a review of empirical evidence supporting the value of integrating contemplative practices into childhood education. The process involved in the implementation of RCTs requires that techniques being evaluated be stripped of their cultural and historical context, reduced to their simplest form, and often altered for the purpose of standardization. Authors proudly emphasized when Yogic practices had been manualized or standardized. This was repeatedly mentioned in the exemplars that employed Shanti Generation Yoga, TIMBER, and TLS. The irony in the repeated emphasis on interventions being manualized, secular, and universal is that while it is aligned with the values of Western research methods, this approach to practice runs directly counter to the tradition of Yoga, where emphasis is placed on instruction that is tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual.

Well-aligned with Western scientific values and expectations, all ten articles sought to strengthen the argument that Yoga has clinical and educational worth by contributing findings that confirmed earlier studies. When hypotheses were not met, new articles were written that emphasized successful outcomes of the study and minimized these contradictions, exemplified by four of the ten articles selected for this analysis. Introduction for each article reviewed literature based solely on previous research that used Western scientific methods in their research design. Previous research findings in the areas of neuropsychology and neurology were used in every article to explain the efficacy of Yoga. The call for a systemic investigation of potential

mechanisms at play at in Yoga practice was echoed in four out of ten articles. The meta-analysis suggested that identifying mechanisms of stress reduction will make it possible for practitioners to modify Yoga to “target different types of stress and base interventions on the most effective components of Yoga” (p. 380). This last quote reveals the desire to further compartmentalize and modify Yoga to best serve the perceived needs of patients, U.S. psychologists, and governing bodies.

All articles mentioned the need for future research to provide supportive evidence for the efficacy of their intervention strategy. Some articles mentioned that the clinical benefit of Yoga in the context of U.S. psychology is a relatively novel research subject, and needs to be pursued with greater rigor, as defined by Western standards of research methodology. The meta-analysis critiqued previous research, indicating that the selection of assessment tools should be age appropriate, reliable, valid, and that the research design should have sufficient power, randomization, and appropriate control groups. Within the meta-analysis, Riley and Park (2015) suggested specific topics for future research, such as investigating the impact of Yoga on “ANS/Vagal nerve activity, nitric oxide/endothelial function, endogenous endocannabinoids and opiates, cytokine levels, and limbic system activity” (p. 389). Even when hypotheses were confirmed, hedged language surrounding the need for confirmation via repeated findings leaves the reader with the impression that no amount of research is enough. The fact that a 5,000 year-old tradition requires the validation of Western scientific research methods is a silent means of protecting the tradition of psychology from having its moral and ontological assumptions questioned by an older more nuanced tradition with its own, possibly more effective system of psychology.

The ways that U.S. psychology monitors outcomes is also worthy of examination relative to the Yogic tradition. In both clinical and empirical work we rely on significance, either clinical or statistical, to determine change, progress, or efficacy of interventions. In clinical work, we measure progress and outcomes using clinical significance where we measure change (i.e., reduction in symptoms via standardized measures or self-report) to determine whether an individual is responding positively to a given intervention. These interventions are often determined by empirical work (i.e., evidence-based practices) which have demonstrated, often via RCTs, statistical significance, or a specific result of an intervention on a large-scale. While this is in line with the Western standards of research, it is rather in opposition to the Yogic tradition's values of individualized practices. Many outcome measures are standardized for ease of interpretation and generalizability, as well as to demonstrate validity and reliability across populations. This also helps to provide a common language for psychologists to use when communicating about patients or groups of patients (i.e., people with depression). From a Yogic perspective, however, where practices are specifically and thoughtfully tailored to suit the needs of the individual, Western monitoring outcomes may not be an appropriate mechanism for measurement. This is particularly important to consider when evaluating the focus on using Yoga as an intervention in U.S. psychology. Part of the appropriation of the Yogic tradition may be the inadequate, incomplete, or inappropriate attempt to measure outcomes using Western standards that are innately in conflict with the Yogic philosophy.

Subtheme five: Use of Yoga for capital gain. The stance of disciplinary superiority taken by psychologists extends beyond the assumed use of evaluative methods indigenous to the U.S. culture, to an entitled sense of proprietary rights over selected practices from the Yogic tradition. Two of ten articles utilized Shanti Generation Yoga as an intervention strategy for

their research (Quach, Gibler, & Mano, 2016; Quach et al., 2016). The authors suggested this method was created by Abby Willis, a U.S. Yoga teacher with a Master's degree in developmental education. She proceeded to obtain a copyright for this approach to Yoga in 2009 when she founded the Shanti Generation, a foundation with the following mission:

...1. Provide greater access to the benefits of Yoga and mindfulness for older children and teens via our DVD programs. 2. Support parents and teachers in gaining a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances involved in helping youth integrate mindfulness into everyday life. (Shanti Generation, n.d., About)

Frank et al. (2016) utilized the TLS program as an intervention within their research design, an intervention that was developed by one of the authors of the article. An online biography statement included the following about the author:

As a child, he learned Yoga and meditation from his father, and later studied with monks in the Himalayas. Inspired by the twin ideals of self-realization and selfless service...his research interests are now centered on the scientific application of Transformative Life Skills. (Omega, n.d., Workshops & Events)

The article using TIMBER as an intervention is an example of desire for ownership rights over selected Yogic practices. The primary author, Pradhan, developed TIMBER. His online biographical statement includes the following:

Dr. Pradhan has pioneered the development of many disorder-specific psychotherapy models that have been successfully used in most of the psychiatric disorders in the population from ages 6 years to 75 years. Many of these models are based on his monastic training and combine cognitive therapy with Yoga. These contributions to the mental health field are evidence-based and neuro-biologically informed. These treatment

models are: TIMBER therapy for refractory PTSD (patents pending); MEMBER-AM therapy for chronic addiction; MEMBER-PM therapy model for chronic pain; DepS Y-MBCT model for chronic depression; the MBR-RAM therapy model for dyslexia and cognitive disorders; and MB-GERM therapy model for chronic Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. (OCD; Basant Pradhan, n.d., Basant Pradhan)

Disorder-specific psychotherapy models that include Yogic practices mirror the suggestion of Riley and Park (2015) that identifying the mechanisms at work in Yoga will make it possible for practitioners to modify the practice to target stress-related concerns and develop interventions based on “the most effective components of Yoga” (p. 380). No doubt these new intervention strategies would become intellectual property as well.

Shapiro et al. (2015) reviewed empirical evidence that supported the integration of contemplative practices into educational settings. They reviewed the following six trademarked contemplative education programs that overtly stated Yoga as an included component: iRest for kids, Still Quiet Place, Little Flower Yoga, Attention Academy Program, Yoga for Classrooms, and Sfat Hakeshey. All six programs are developed by individuals living in the U.S. who have economic and intellectual property rights to each program’s design, control over its use, and economic rights to any profits rendered from its implementation.

Lastly, Medina et al. (2015) use the term “interoceptive cues” (p. 289), which is reminiscent of the intervention strategy Trauma Sensitive Yoga (TSY). The Trauma Center describes this copyrighted intervention strategy as an “empirically validated, clinical intervention for complex trauma or chronic, treatment-resistant post-traumatic stress disorder” (Trauma Center, n.d.) . The Trauma Center Trauma Sensitive Yoga (TCTSY) program is included in the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) database published by the

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA). TCTSY draws very little from the Yogic tradition and is primarily supported by Trauma Theory, Attachment Theory, and Neuroscience (Trauma Center, n.d.).

Recognizing the influence of capitalism on the integration of Yoga into U.S. psychology gave rise to a fifth subtheme: Techniques that Western research methods found to be clinically beneficial are often manualized, standardized, combined with widely accepted intervention strategies and then trademarked, copyrighted, and commodified by psychologists in the U.S. Whether motivated by the desire to serve target populations, professional development and recognition, or financial gain, psychologists in the U.S. are appropriating and commodifying, and profiting off of Yoga to create new models for treatment. This not only conflicts with the moral framework of Yoga, it is seemingly being done without a nuanced understanding of Yoga, the impacts of altering it, or evaluating the philosophical compatibility of Yoga and psychology in the U.S. Medina et al. (2015) mentioned in their article that there is a growing interest in alternatives to psychotherapy, and that the benefit realized through practicing Yoga may have reduced the client base for psychologists in the U.S. This implies that the motivation for appropriating Yoga as an adjunctive or complimentary approach may have arose in part from U.S. psychologists' fear of becoming obsolete. Psychologists in the U.S. would likely feel threatened by the possibility that Yoga could offer practitioners the same clinical benefit as psychotherapy at a fraction of the cost.

Exemplar Theme Two: Yoga within the Neoliberal Agenda

For the reader's ease, I have broken up this shared theme into two parts. The first part provides supportive evidence from the ten articles that illustrate how Yoga has become an

artifact of U.S. psychology. The second part discusses how this reductive and instrumental understanding and application of Yoga reifies neoliberalism in the U.S.

Subtheme one: Yoga as an artifact of U.S. psychology. A trans-cultural and trans-historical view of U.S. psychology prevents its scholars and practitioners from recognizing other indigenous psychologies (Christopher et al., 2014). Instead, what occurs is the unconscious imposition of culture bound epistemology and selective appropriation from traditions of the other to bolster the tradition of U.S. psychology. The manner in which U.S. psychologists have begun dismantling the tradition of Yoga, decontextualizing concepts and practices and dropping them into the Western toolbox, exemplifies this trend. Yoga is misunderstood, discussed, researched, and applied as an adjunctive intervention rather than an older and arguably more established tradition inclusive of its own indigenous psychology. This occurs within all ten exemplars to the following subtheme: Yoga is consigned to being an adjunctive therapy, rather than a multifaceted tradition with its own system of psychology, theory of mind/mental illness, and techniques to restore health. As stated in the support for the first theme, each exemplar described Yoga using instrumental terms, it is equated with MBP (comprised mainly of decontextualized and instrumentalized practices from Buddhist Psychology), it is reduced from a tradition to a technique or means, and it is evaluated based on its instrumental benefit.

To be fair, the reductive and incomplete transmission of the Yoga tradition was pervasive throughout the U.S. prior to its use by psychologists. That psychologists did not look beyond local, easily available, and culturally syntonetic expressions of Yoga is not surprising. None of the exemplar articles reviewed source Yogic literature, and the two articles that attempted to give credence to the tradition misrepresented it while boasting a culturally sensitive interpretation of

Yoga. Yoga is reduced to an adjunctive technique that prevents an authentic dialogue between the tradition of psychology and the tradition of Yoga, a dialogue that might call into question the institutions and practices of U.S. psychology and the neoliberal status quo.

The moral conflicts inherent in cross-cultural contact often registers in the very marrow of our being. Exposing our most cherished understandings to doubt and questioning can be accompanied by unease, fear, and existential anguish. It is understandable why U.S. psychologists would rather instrumentalize Yoga rather than consider an older and arguably more established tradition with its own psychology; to engage in dialogue with the tradition of Yoga requires a readiness for the moral convictions and ideological assumptions of U.S. psychology to be challenged. This unconscious attempt to circumvent the moral pain and ideological uncertainty of allowing the Yoga tradition to speak directly to our own and opening to a multiplicity of meaning. Furthermore, it would highlight that our tradition, like all traditions, is unfinished, imperfect, and limited by culture and history. This would undermine the ontological claims of U.S. psychologists, stripping them of the ideological security that accompanies perceived disciplinary authority.

It is this sense of security and authority, and lack of training, that prevents U.S. psychologists from confronting and acknowledging their prejudices, from noticing and giving voice to the assumptions that guide how Yoga is understood and applied. These pre-understandings comprise the very tradition of U.S. psychology. These moral convictions and cherished concepts are embodied and given lived authority through the practices of the tradition. Unfortunately, by allowing these threads of understanding to go unrecognized, they become ideologies that get projected as universal common sense (Gadamer, 1975). Prejudice is the means by which the tradition of U.S. psychology speaks to its scholars and practitioners. Left

unarticulated and uncritiqued, the voices of tradition exert an unconscious influence that deafen us to other indigenous psychologies. What follows is an attempt to recognize the prejudices that resulted in Yoga being understood and applied as an adjunctive technique, a social artifact of U.S. psychology.

U.S. psychologists' commitment to the neoliberal ideologies of capitalism, instrumentalism, and scientific proceduralism are directly involved in why Yoga was reduced to a social artifact. In the context of a highly competitive capitalist economy, psychological theorizing, research, and professional practice are expected to produce rapid results. An instrumental understanding of Yoga facilitates its evaluation using Western scientific research methods. All ten exemplars reported on research that employed these methods. Western scientific methods rely on reducing the object of inquiry to its simplest form, isolating it from contextual factors that might act as silent mediators for specific findings. A reductionistic understanding of Yoga further allows for its practices to be scripted and manualized, thus aiding in the generalizability and replicability of research findings and increasing the perception of Yoga as a valid and reliable therapeutic tool. Moreover, an instrumental, procedural, mechanistic version of Yoga can be readily combined with EBTs that share this technicist methodology. This type of psychological theorizing often leads to developing new integrative models, or to use Sugarman's (2015) term, new "brands" of treatment that provide their developers with professional recognition and financial gain.

Consigning Yoga to an adjunctive technique also supports psychologists in the U.S. to integrate Yoga in clinical settings with relative ease. Instrumental and manualized approaches to Yoga lend well to the time-efficient and cost-effective training of practitioners, as well as predictable treatment duration and outcomes. Seven out of ten exemplars specifically

investigated the clinical benefits of Yoga, three studies were conducted in clinical settings, and all ten discussed research supporting the clinical utility of Yoga in their literature reviews. Findings that supported the instrumental benefits of Yoga as a clinical tool appeared at the forefront of the discussion section of every exemplar.

Quach, Gibler, and Mano (2016) cited research supporting the clinical benefit of Yoga for the treatment of anxiety, depression, stress reduction, and ADHD. Their findings suggest that Hatha Yoga can be a tool for self-initiated stress reduction. Goethe et al. (2016) cited research that suggests Yoga can downregulate the sympathetic nervous system, lending to its clinical benefit in the treatment of any disorder exacerbated by stress. They cited extensive research supporting the use of Yoga for the treatment of anxiety and depression, and many that suggested Yoga practice improved participant's quality of life. Their own findings revealed that Yoga practice significantly decreases salivary cortisol levels. Genovese and Fondran (2016) designed their study to determine whether Yoga practice could reduce depression, anxiety, and stress in college students. Their preliminary findings suggest that both depression and anxiety were significantly reduced through the use of Yoga, while less than significant, they also reported observing a reduction in subjectively endorsed levels of stress. Medina et al. (2015) cited research that implied Yoga could be used for the treatment of any disorder where emotional reactivity was a factor such as: Borderline personality disorder, substance use disorders, Posttraumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, and anxiety. The authors reported research findings showing Yoga significantly increased the capacity for distress tolerance in participants. Riley and Park (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of research supporting the use of Yoga for stress reduction, and identified two psychological and biological mechanisms they believed were responsible for this effect. Shapiro et al. (2015) cited research that supported the use of Yoga

with children to increase attentional control, emotional regulation, and perspective taking. Frank et al. (2016) cited research using Yoga to reduce stress and enhance emotion regulation, social skills, and impulse control. Their findings also indicated that Yoga increased use of positive coping skills to reduce stress. Pradhan et al. (2015) reported on their research evaluating TIMBER, an integrative method combining standardized Yoga and meditation techniques with cognitive behavioral interventions to treat trauma in adolescents. While the authors suggested further research to verify their findings, their results implied that TIMBER was effective in the treatment of adolescents with PTSD. Quach et al. (2016) cited research on the effect of Yoga on perceived stress and anxiety. Lastly, Hopkins et al. (2016) evaluated the ability of Yoga to target cortisol reactivity to stress and affective eating in women who are classified as obese. The authors cited research indicating that Yoga downregulates the sympathetic nervous system and activates the parasympathetic nervous system, resulting in reduced stress, anxiety, and depression, and improved emotional wellbeing. Their findings supported the efficacy of heated Hatha Yoga for the treatment of stress reactivity and affective eating. Each article was an example of the way Yoga is being primed as an adjunctive intervention, a tool to achieve specific clinical benefits.

The growing field of educational psychology was evident in the majority of exemplars, where the instrumental benefit Yoga may have for enhancing academic performance and improving students' behavior in educational settings was the central focus. Aside from the fact that nine out of ten exemplars were based on research funded by institutes of higher education, seven out of ten were studies implemented in educational settings, and five out of ten specifically focused on whether the integration of mindfulness practices into educational settings enhances social, emotional, academic, and executive functioning. Quach, Gibler, and Mano (2016) and

Quach et al. (2016) reported on different aspects of a study that evaluated a school-based mindfulness program and compared the effects of Yoga and meditation on improving academic performance, executive functioning, reducing stress, and anxiety. Goethe et al. (2016) cited extensive research they referred to as “Yoga-cognition literature” (p. 109) and demonstrated in their own research that both short- and long-term practice improved cognitive and executive function, particularly with regard to attention, processing speed, and memory. The authors attributed this effect to the ability of Yoga to help downregulate the sympathetic nervous system and decrease cortisol levels. Moreover, they cited neuroimaging studies that demonstrate increased gray matter volume in brain regions including the frontal lobe and bilateral hippocampal gray matter after a six month Yoga intervention. Genovese and Fondran (2016) studied the impact of Yoga on the emotional wellbeing of college students. Shapiro et al. (2015) reviewed literature on the integration of contemplative practices into educational settings, and reviewed a number of programs currently operating that include practices such as Yoga into childhood education. The authors suggest that Yoga practice can be understood as a form of metacognition that can be used for “brain training” (p. 2). They cited studies showing that brain training produces increased neuroplasticity and improved executive functioning such as self-monitoring, discrimination, and sustained attention. In particular, they focused on the concept of self-regulation in a number of early-onset disorders such as ADHD and the negative impact these disorders can have on academic performance. Lastly, they asserted that improved executive functioning skills gained through contemplative practices like Yoga (such as the ability to shift easily between tasks and inhibit impulses) would improve educational outcomes for children with these disorders. Frank et al. (2016) evaluated the use of a “Yoga-based social-emotional wellness program” (p. 1) with pre-teens from an impoverished inner-city middle school. The

authors cited research regarding the psychological vulnerability of adolescence, the heightened stress experienced by impoverished families, and the potential for Yoga to be a solution through enhancing emotion regulation, attention, and academic performance. Their findings provide preliminary data that Yoga practice significantly increases the use of positive coping skills, emotional regulation and articulation, problem solving, positive thinking, and cognitive flexibility. They also observed increased school participation and decreased unexcused absences, detentions, and suspensions. Lastly, while Pradhan et al. (2015) focused on the clinical treatment of PTSD using TIMBER methodology (combining Yoga, meditation, and CBT), they extensively discussed how reduced symptoms of PTSD and stress via the downregulation of the sympathetic nervous system could improve academic outcomes for adolescents who have survived trauma. These articles provide redundant examples for the instrumental use of Yoga for educational psychology.

Together, the collection of the exemplar articles paint a clear picture of Yoga reduced to an instrumental appendage thereby functions as an artifact of U.S. psychology to support the theory, research, and professional practice of psychology in the U.S. From educational to clinical settings, Yoga is being evaluated and implemented as a tool to bolster the tradition of psychology, without an evaluation of the moral and political consequences. What follows is a discussion of how the specific instrumental benefits of Yoga considered desirable by U.S. psychologists are compatible with the ideologies embedded in neoliberalism.

Subtheme two: Neoliberalism reified. A number of psychologists identified with the relational turn in U.S. psychology (Bordo, 2003; Benjamin, 2003, Christopher et al., 2014; Cushman, 2013a, 2013b, & 2013c, Goodman, 2016; Fowers, 2010; Harrist & Richardson, 2014; Layton, 2010; Sugarman, 2015) have dedicated considerable attention to identifying the

ideologies that evolved into the politics of neoliberalism and their moral, social, and environmental consequences. These authors have identified the principle ideologies of neoliberalism as: individualism, instrumentalism, capitalism, intellectual imperialism, secularism, paternalism, and scientific proceduralism. This resulted in a culture that maximizes competition, rewards narcissism, and encourages dissociation via entertainment and technology; and has generated a population that is largely disenfranchised, isolated, relationally inept, self-obsessed, and insatiable. Psychologists in the U.S. embody these ideologies, giving them lived authority through healing technologies like cognitive (Sampson, 1981) or behavioral interventions (Fowers, 2010), as well as positive psychology (Sugarman, 2015). The language of these technologies identifies pathology within the self-contained individual and normalizes the socio-political context of neoliberalism. In the context of the neoliberal U.S., healing is understood in terms of reaching or restoring one to a state of optimal functioning. As these ideologies emerged in the process of interpretation, so did this subtheme: The instrumental benefits of Yoga identified as valuable by U.S. psychologists both reflect and reinforce the subjective experience of neoliberal politics. What follows is a discussion of the instrumental benefits of Yoga identified by the authors of the exemplars, with specific attention to the way these gains reflect and reinforce the subjective experience of neoliberal politics.

Given the sheer number of times it was mentioned across all ten exemplars, the ability for Yoga to reduce stress was clearly valued by the authors. Stress appears as a hallmark of life in the neoliberal U.S. The term is often used flippantly, as a catch-all explanation for psychological and physiological problems that do not have an easily referenced etiology. But what is stress? Bordo (2003) wrote, “I take the psychopathologies that develop within a culture, far from being anomalies or aberrations, to be characteristic expressions of that culture; to be, indeed, the

crystallization of much that is wrong with it” (p. 141). Perhaps stress is the word that encapsulates and obfuscates the various contextual factors of neoliberalism that exert extreme pressure, provide minimal support, and assign maximum blame on the individual for the circumstances that are largely out of their control. In the context of hyper-individualism, citizens of the neoliberal U.S. are expected to be self-reliant, self-motivated, and personally responsible for finding answers for their moral, ethical, financial, educational, occupational, and relational problems. Facing increasing inflation, the privatization of public resources, the defunding of social services that used to act as a public safety net, and a paucity of communal and familial support, citizens of the U.S. are expected to devise their own coping strategies, manage their own defenses, and innovate their own systems of meaning making. Further, they are expected to be flexible, effective, competitive, and shamelessly self-promoting, and to present an air of confidence and security despite the erosion of loyalty and commitment in both personal and professional relationships. In this context, the combination of pressure and responsibility placed on the individual is somewhat unthinkable. It is no surprise that there is a qualified epidemic of stress and stress-related illness.

The cultural and historical factors that led to the escalating levels of stress experienced by individuals in the neoliberal U.S. remain predominantly unarticulated in our conversation about stress. If these facets of life are mentioned, they are discussed as natural and unavoidable elements of modern day society. Stress is talked about like a value-free cause that creates maladaptive psychological and physiological effects inside the self-contained individual, effects that can be ameliorated instrumentally – using a variety of psychological techniques, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), or in this case, Yoga. By pathologizing and medicalizing stress, by treating it like something that exists in the vacuum of the individual,

psychologists inadvertently blame their patients for their socio-political circumstances. As they pathologize individuals, psychologists are complicit in normalizing the politics of neoliberalism. Power, authority, and recommended therapeutic models to address stress present the therapist as an expert on how to interpret the patients experience. However, instead of using this power to validate clients' experiences of untenable sociopolitical circumstances and frame their response as appropriate, U.S. psychologists offer their clients techniques to better manage themselves, to tolerate the intolerable, and to function optimally within a society where they are disenfranchised. The language of the DSM 5 states that to be considered a diagnosable disorder, the psychological distress caused by symptoms must also cause impairment in functioning in one or more life domains. By this definition, a client's suffering is not important, does not warrant intervention, and does not grant an individual access to support as long as the individual can continue functioning. This suggests that we ignore the pain of others as long as they are participants in profit-producing enterprises that uphold the status quo. In doing so, psychologists in the U.S. sustain the functional workforce that drives the engine of capitalism. This has striking implications with regard to our complicity in the perpetuation of neoliberalism, and subsequently, our patients' suffering.

Similar to its stress-relieving benefits, Yoga is touted for its efficacy in relieving symptoms of depression and anxiety. In the previous section I referenced authors who describe anxiety (Sugarman, 2015; Cushman, 2013a & 2013b) and depression (Greenberg, 2010; Harrist & Richardson, 2014) as appropriate expressions of insecurity, fear, and despair in a world where facing inadequate resources and support the individual is saddled with unreasonable responsibility and expected to excel in a fast paced high pressure life wrought with loss, conflict, and moral confusion. Unfortunately, the gold standard treatments for anxiety and depression do

not recognize this etiology, as doing so would undermine the sociopolitical power arrangements of the neoliberal U.S. Depression and anxiety are classified as mood disorders, where an individual experiences perpetual and debilitating emotional distress. U.S. psychology describes emotions as discrete biochemical reactions that occur inside the self-contained individual. Shweder (1994) began to expand upon this limited medicalized understanding of emotions when he wrote:

My general claim is that “emotion” terms are names for particular interpretive schemas (e.g. “remorse,” “guilt,” “anger, “shame”) of a particular story-like, script-like, or narrative kind...More specifically, “feelings” (both somatic and affective) have the shape and meaning of an “emotion” when they are experienced as a perception of some self-relevant-condition of the world and as a plan of action for the protection of dignity, honor, and self-esteem. (pp. 32–33)

While this definition introduces the concept of emotions as interpretive systems, Shweder still sources these systems inside the individual. Stolorow (2011) took this line of reasoning further when he described emotions as both phenomenological (experienced internally) and contextual (constituted by values and understandings that are communicated intersubjectively). Stolorow (2011) explained:

...affect — that is, subjective emotional experience — is something that from birth onward is regulated, or misregulated, within ongoing relational systems. Therefore, locating affect at its motivational centre automatically entails a radical contextualization of virtually all aspects of human psychological life. (p. 6)

Stolorow extended the understanding of emotion beyond the self-contained individual to a system of meaning making that is developed via relational scaffolding. A hermeneutic

perspective on emotion takes this perspective further still; understanding emotions as packages of cultural understanding intended to provide the individual with schemas for making meaning out of their experiences and devising a plan for how one wants to respond. From this angle, the cultural values and ideologies contained in these interpretive schemas have the power to change the affective experience or phenomenology of emotions. This suggests that the language and treatment of mood disorders may place inappropriate responsibility on the individual for their felt distress. Furthermore, by assigning a biochemical explanation for emotions, psychologists reinforce the utility of a multi-million dollar psychopharmacology industry that treats the symptoms of mood disorders rather than the source. The instrumental use of Yoga is seen as a cost effective, adjunctive intervention intended to improve one's ability to self-regulate.

Self-regulation is defined by Shapiro et al. (2015) as the ability to effectively direct and sustain attention, monitor and manage thoughts, and regulate emotions. All ten exemplars discussed some aspect of Yoga's ability to enhance self-monitoring, cognitive flexibility, sustained attention, and the ability to emotionally regulate. The importance given to these facets of self-control reflect Sugarman's (2015) description of the multiple self that has emerged in the context of the neoliberal U.S. Sugarman asserted that the multiple self is dependent on self-control, the ability to design and revise identities that make one an attractive candidate for short-lived opportunities, and to project these identities confidently, flexibly, and adaptively. In this context, with the aim of optimal functioning, it is readily apparent why the ability to reduce emotional arousal and strategically project preferred emotions would be of value.

Emotion-regulation, self-monitoring, and cognitive flexibility are capabilities that both support the politics, practices, and institutions of neoliberalism and are expressed in the positive psychology movement. Sugarman (2015) wrote:

In the light of positive psychology, happiness is a product of individual effort. Only you can make yourself happy. The valence of emotions directly reflects optimistic and pessimistic thoughts. Thoughts are within one's control and can be manipulated to effect desired emotional states. Consequently, not only are individuals capable of changing their emotions, but also, they ultimately are responsible for their emotional experiences. According to positive psychologists, when we accept responsibility for how we feel and learn to wield our thoughts in the service of bettering our lives, positive emotions and happiness result. It is this exercise of agency forged by a sense of self-responsible freedom that is the substance of happiness. By the same token, we are to blame for our unhappiness. If we are unhappy, it is because we have failed to accept responsibility for circumstances and take action. Abdicating responsibility for our state of being and inaction derived from succumbing to pessimism bred from docility, resignation, dependency, and believing falsely that our futures are determined by traumas and other psychological injuries sustained in our pasts. (p. 15)

The emphasis on individual responsibility and dissociation of the social and political causes of personal distress that characterize neoliberalism are clear in this theoretical conceptualization of happiness. Furthermore, from the perspective of positive psychologists, the purpose and practice of living and the value attributed to others and relationships have become circumscribed by self-interest and instrumentalism. Sugarman (2015) asserted that the explosive popularity of positive psychology is radically reshaping life in the U.S. He noted, "The reach of its influence extends far beyond counseling and psychotherapy to education, economic analysis, business, management, marketing, sports coaching, life coaching, law enforcement, corrections, and military training" (p. 14). This passage highlights power of psychologists to define what

constitutes a good life, a happy life, and how our definitions reinforce or reproduce the cultural practices and institutions in which we are embedded.

Aside from those previously mentioned, a number of exemplars (Hopkins et al., 2016; Medina et al., 2015; Pradhan et al., 2015; Shapiro et al., 2015) focused on the following four instrumental benefits of Yoga that further reflect the ideologies of positive psychology: self-reliance, self-discipline, distress tolerance, and quality of life (or perceived wellbeing and positive affect). One study discussed self-reliance and self-discipline in the context of home practice, while many others discussed these benefits with regard to Yoga's capacity to enhance self-monitoring. Medina et al. (2015) and Shapiro et al. (2015) described the phenomenology of Yoga practice as the process of holding or moving between postures while sustaining attention on somatic experience despite intense sensation or physiological discomfort. The authors credit these facets of practice as possible mechanisms that mediate the cultivation of distress tolerance, self-monitoring, self-reliance, self-discipline, and improved quality of life. In particular, Shapiro et al. (2015) noted that holding poses, and observing sensation without judgment or resistance, interrupts maladaptive interpretations of experience, and thus leads to positive affect and improved quality of life. Medina et al. (2015) pointed to downregulation of the SNS as a mediator, and cited a plethora of research showing Yoga practice decreases SNS sensitivity.

The focus within positive psychology on cultivating self-reliance, self-monitoring, and cognitive flexibility further compounds the pressure and responsibility borne by the individual. Thus when an individual inevitably faces conflict, loss, or moral confusion, their suffering is compounded by shame due to assuming undue responsibility, understanding outcomes as solely the result of their own personal failure. This most likely has devastating effects on self-esteem and the development of a healthy self-concept. Ironically, the presentation of Yoga within the

exemplars as an instrumental solution for improved self-esteem and self-concept is fully compatible with the practice of positive psychology.

A number of the exemplars cited or discussed findings that promoted Yoga as a tool to address body-dissatisfaction. Impoverished perception of one's appearance establishes a clear link between individual suffering and socio-political circumstances. Jean Kilbourne's films have documented the devastating effects of advertising on women's gender identity and body dissatisfaction over the course of four decades. The film *Slim Hopes* evaluates the connection between advertising and the rise of eating disorders. In recent years, more men report body-dissatisfaction and being diagnosed with eating disorders, though women continue to present with these concerns far more frequently. From a positive psychology perspective, if the individual is unhappy about something, they are responsible for adjusting problematic thinking and taking action to bring about the desired result. Unfortunately, while our lifestyles can certainly impact our physiology, there are inflexible limitations to our degree of control in this arena. When applied to body dissatisfaction, the unrealistic responsibility placed on the individual in neoliberal politics as expressed through positive psychology may itself lead to the development of eating disorders. Bordo (2003) commented on the rise of anorexia as concurrent with the rise of women in positions of social, political, and economic power. She wrote:

...the body, far from being some fundamentally stable, acultural constant to which we must contrast all culturally relative and institutional forms, is constantly "in the grip" as Foucault puts it, of cultural practices. Not that this is a matter of cultural repression of the instinctual or natural body. Rather there is no "natural" body. Cultural practices, far from exerting their power against spontaneous needs, "basic" pleasures or instincts, or "fundamental" structures of bodily experience, are already and always inscribed, as

Foucault has emphasized, “on our bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures.” Our bodies, no less than anything else that is human, are constituted by culture. (p. 142)

Given the cultural depiction of women with anorexia through advertising and the language of positive psychology, eating disorders characterized by restricting food intake, over-exercise, or use of laxatives might be described as individuals attempting to accept responsibility and powerfully enact the changes they desire. Conversely, given this context and linguistic frame, eating disorders characterized by bingeing or affective eating might be portrayed as an abdication of responsibility, indulgence, resignation, dependency, and succumbing to the false belief that one’s wounds define them. Both of these conceptualizations are dangerous and potentially life threatening for the clients served by U.S. psychologists. Furthermore, they sustain oppressive marketing practices and insure the financial security of cosmetic surgeons and the diet industry. Interestingly, two of the exemplars focused heavily on the instrumental benefit of Yoga to decrease affective eating via the increase of distress tolerance. In this case, psychologists’ instrumental use of Yoga appears as part of a circular relationship between neoliberal circumstances, the creation of psychological distress, and the healing technologies designed to treat that distress reinforcing, and the reification of those circumstances.

The practices and institutions developed to address trauma in the neoliberal U.S. exemplify the circular process articulated above. As discussed previously, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can be understood as a psychological invention meant to describe the myriad cultural and historical expressions of trauma (Summerfield, 2001; as quoted in Harrist & Richardson, 2013). Trauma theory and subsequent clinical practice shifts attention away from the social and political sources of harm, and towards biological and neuropsychological

mechanisms and processes involved in PTSD. By medicalizing the disorder, established institutions and practices that perpetuate harm are permitted to continue operating unabated. Furthermore, while most of the exemplars mentioned the instrumental utility of Yoga in the treatment of trauma, none evaluated whether the philosophical underpinnings of Yoga are appropriate in the treatment of trauma.

The selective appropriation and application of specific Yogic practices appears to be an unconscious attempt to avoid a more rigorous evaluation of philosophical compatibility, and assumes that by decontextualizing Yogic practices their philosophical basis loses its influence. Conversely, hermeneutic theory suggests that practices are inextricably bound to their philosophical context, and Yogic theory asserts that the philosophical tenants of Yoga are realized through practice. For example, Yogic philosophy asserts that understanding the self as a separate contained bodymind is a kind of cognitive distortion, and that through purification and practice the yogi begins to experience themselves as undifferentiated consciousness. Individuals with trauma, especially those who experience chronic adverse experiences during childhood and adolescence, often suffer from a fractured sense of identity. Trauma treatment often necessitates the repair of a patient's self-concept, whereas the experience of practicing Yoga (especially when *asana* is paired with *pranayama* and meditation) undermines the concrete reality of the self. From this vantage point, TIMBER methodology, or the manualized combination of Yoga, meditation and CBT, designed specifically to treat trauma, could undermine a client's sense of stability as trauma symptoms like hypervigilance stem from the perception of life as intolerably uncertain and dangerous. This brief reflection sheds new light on the exemplar that used TIMBER methodology in the treatment of five traumatized adolescents. Thus, the instrumental use of Yoga evident in the research seeking physiological and neuroscientific explanations that

bolster trauma theory and generate a diverse array of manualized, empirically-based treatment methods also obfuscates the philosophical dissimilarity between Yoga and U.S. psychology.

Another instrumental benefit repeatedly mentioned across all ten exemplars is the ability for Yoga to enhance cognitive and executive functioning. Sugarman (2015) noted that over the course of the last decade, U.S. psychologists have shifted the aim of education away from preparing citizens and toward the psychological needs of individual students. While all ten articles cited research findings that demonstrate this link, six of the articles specifically evaluated the instrumental use of Yoga to improve students ability to learn, enhance executive functions, support academic performance and boost the wellbeing and smooth functioning of educational settings in general. Authors consistently mentioned Yoga's ability to strengthen cognitive abilities, namely working memory and processing speed, as well as executive functions including: attentional control, self-monitoring, shifting, and inhibiting. The authors in two articles discussed how these improvements in cognitive and executive functioning foster the development of self-regulation, which supports academic achievement and emotional wellbeing. Shapiro et al. (2015) cited self-regulation research implying these skills were linked with neuroplasticity, a concept that initiated the brain-training movement. Frank et al. (2016) discussed the use of Yoga in schools to decrease stress, anxiety, body dissatisfaction, rumination, intrusive thoughts, emotional arousal, fatigue, and problematic behaviors such as instigating conflict or truancy. Similarly, three of the six articles emphasized Yoga's ability to enhance pro-social skills such as non-judgmental acceptance, perspective taking, emotion regulation, communication, and how these result in improved self-control, self-concept, and interpersonal relations. Goethe et al. (2016) attributed these instrumental benefits to the ability of Yoga to downregulate SNS and HPA axis, activate PNS, and attenuate cortisol levels. They noted

chronic SNS/HPA activation have detrimental impacts on brain function, and cited cross-sectional neuroimaging studies with Yoga practitioners revealed increased gray matter volume in the frontal lobe and bilateral hippocampal region of the brain after six months.

The instrumental benefits of Yoga identified in the exemplars mirror the way neoliberal ideologies are expressed and reinforced through the practices and institutes of educational psychology. Sugarman (2015) asserted that, “By the late 1970’s, psychologists had declared that by enhancing self-esteem, self-concept, self-regulation, and self-efficacy, students could acquire the psychological capabilities required to become enterprising, life-long learners” (p. 16). Sugarman (2015) cited the work of Martin and McLellan (2013) to discuss their evaluation of the historical roots of what is now being called “enterprise education” (p. 17). They noted:

...enterprise education...not only relies on the psychologized conception of the learner, but also teaches and encourages risk-taking, initiative, self-esteem, self-appraisal, management and organization skills, flexibility, team building, and how to market skills and abilities in the same way as one would a business. (p. 17)

Here we see how the multiple self is indoctrinated by U.S. psychologists in the ideologies of neoliberalism. Sugarman (2015) remarked:

The expressive, enterprising, and entitled student is a unique individual who is active, self-disciplined, self-directed, self-assured, who bears responsibility for her learning, and who is equipped with strategic tools for goal-setting, progress monitoring, performance evaluation, and problem solving. Martin and McLellan assert that these characteristics align with a very specific form of self-governance, one especially well suited to the governmentality required of neoliberalism. (p. 17)

Throughout the discussion of this last subtheme, the juxtaposition of neoliberal language with the language used to discuss Yoga reveals how the instrumental use of Yoga overtly endorses and reinforces neoliberalism in the U.S. A decontextualized and reductive version of Yoga supports the continued dissociation of the indigenous nature of U.S. psychology, and psychologists complicity in normalizing and reproducing the circumstances that cause our patients' suffering. Conversely, I suggest that dialogue, as Gadamer (1975) described it, provides an alternative for engaging with the traditions of Yoga.

Remaining Questions from Exemplar Articles

In keeping with the structure of the previous two sections, this section addresses questions that remain unanswered by the source text itself, the interpreter (myself), and the immediate context (foregrounded assumptions; Lord, 2014). These quandaries can be understood in the terms of relational psychoanalysis as unformulated experience (Stern, 2010). Unformulated experience might be described as dissociated experience, a vague knowing or sense that is barely recognizable, but not conscious enough to find language for. Seemingly unanswerable questions may in fact be questions where the answer has been dissociated due to unrecognized prejudice. These answers are often only available through reflection on our participation in enactments or unconscious practices. What follows is a discussion of these question in this context.

In the previous sections, I began by discussing aspects of the text that I struggled to understand, when concepts from the Yoga tradition appeared to move against the grain, as these were the moments that precipitated the generation of a question. Philosophic hermeneutics pays special attention to these moments as signaling when our taken for granted moral understandings and ontological assumptions are coming into conflict with what the text is saying to us.

However, in reading exemplars from my own tradition I was faced with a different challenge, to notice what I took for granted, what felt natural, automatic, and unquestionable. I first caught sight of this prejudice while reading neuroscience and trauma-based theories and research findings used to explain the mechanisms and processes that mediate the clinical benefits of Yoga. I noticed that having been so steeped in the language of neuroscience and trauma theory, that I had moved into passive acceptance or unquestioning receptivity to the theories and concepts being presented to me. I had to read hermeneutic literature intermittently in order to remember that my task was not to regurgitate research findings or theoretical concepts, but rather to situate and discuss the exemplars in context. This raised the following question: What would it take for U.S. psychologists to consider methods of inquiry that give authority to subjective experience as equivalent to Western scientific methods?

The analysis of the exemplars was a classic example of the cyclical relationship between the socio-political values and ideologies of a given culture and era, the self of that culture and era, illness afflicting that self, healers tasked with healing that self, and the healing technologies used in the process of healing (Cushman, 1995). This process allowed for a link to be drawn between the experience of living in the neoliberal U.S., specific types of psychological distress, and psychologists preferred treatment methods both reflecting and reinforcing neoliberal ideologies. While writing I began to wonder: How do neoliberal ideologies determine the range of vision within U.S. psychology? Or, more specifically, how are these ideologies embodied in our understanding of the mind, mental illness, preferred treatment methods, and what constitutes mental health? Moreover, how does the scope of the human psyche within U.S. psychology compare with that of Yoga?

In coming full circle, the influence of neoliberalism on psychology and the ensuing moral

ambiguity and confusion so pervasive in the U.S. in general caused me to reflect back on the unanswered questions. The rich moral framework of Yoga as presented in YS as compared with the relative absence of that framework and passive communication of values in HYP took on new significance in light of the reductive, instrumentalized, and decontextualized understanding and application of Yoga in the U.S. This raised the following question: How does the moral framework of U.S. psychology compare with the moral framework of Yoga, and what are the social and political implications of such a comparison? This concludes the section on remaining or unanswered questions.

CHAPTER VIII: THEMATIC FINDINGS IN DIALOGUE

One central purpose of this study was to facilitate an encounter between traditions from two different cultures to explore whether this could occur without the sublimation of one to the other. In this specific case, the question is whether it is possible for U.S. psychologists to seriously consider Yoga as a whole rather than selectively appropriate facets of the tradition we find desirable while dissociating their context. The structure of this inquiry was designed with this aim in mind, starting with the hermeneutic analysis of the source texts on Yoga. Immersion in source Yogic literature allowed for themes to emerge that illuminated a more complete picture of the tradition as a whole. This was followed by the textual analysis of ten exemplar articles of the dominant discourse on Yoga in modern U.S. psychology. Immersion in the exemplars uncovered themes concerning the mechanisms of appropriation and U.S. psychology as embedded in the ideologies of neoliberalism. In this chapter, these themes are put into dialogue with Yogic theory, philosophy, psychology, and morality, in which the Yogic tradition is allowed to question facets of U.S. psychology. The closing section of this chapter attempts to articulate avenues for allowing U.S. psychology to be influenced by Yogic tradition without reverting back to the unconscious inclination to dissociate or appropriate.

Gadamer's concept of dialogue. This section explains the relevant nuances of Gadamerian dialogue, thereby enhancing the clarity and depth of the subsequent section. Dialogue is a rigorous moral discourse that features the dynamic interaction of embedded and embodied moral assumptions and cherished understandings that ideally results in the development of critical cultural awareness. Dialogue asks us to notice and give voice to the assumptions that guide how we understand what the other says to us. This means recognizing prejudices as threads of moral understanding, signaling us to notice the traditions of thought in

which we participate. In order to prevent prejudices from remaining unnoticed, we must first attend to the moments when what the other is saying moves against the grain or appears unrecognizable (Gadamer, 1975).

To seriously consider another tradition necessitates that we understand all traditions, including our own, as unfinished, imperfect, and limited by the cultural and historical framework that determines its vision. Cultural awareness is generated by allowing the other to call into question our engrained ideologies and understandings that appear as unquestionable, universal truth. To listen to our prejudices means to sense them as the structure that comprise our very being. Our resonant bodies act as instruments where meaning is understood in tactile and emotive terms. Language conveys felt meaning, giving contour to previously unformulated experience. Our felt experience of dialogue gives us vital information about how we are responding. Attending to the enjoyable physical sensations associated with our appreciation of the other combats the inclination to simply appropriate what we find desirable. Similarly, tolerating the physical sensations associated with our aversion to the other allows us to overcome the impulses to judge, dismiss, or dissociate concepts, theories, and practices that run counter to our core values (Fowers & Richardson, 1996). Our bodily experience of dialogue marks the space between simplistic judgments and genuine understanding of the other.

Dialogue asks that we postpone the urge to assert our opinion. Gadamer (1975) notes that opinion has a way of obscuring inquiry and reproducing only itself. Conversely, orienting to the question bares us to an experience of finitude and limitedness. Dialogue does not advocate for uncritical acceptance, but for self-restraint and inquiry that makes recognizable the world of the other. In dialogue, we seek to strengthen the other's argument by asking questions to resolve perceived conflicts in what they are saying to us (Gadamer, 1975). In the back and forth

between the content of the dialogue and our experiential response to it, dialogue leads us in an interpretive dance that follows a somatic-affect-meaning continuum. In this way, bodily cues alert us to what feels natural or alien, allowing us to recognize pre-understandings that might otherwise go unnoticed. Dialogue initiates a critical reflective process that can strengthen our own tradition and clarify our convictions. Our embodied experience in dialogue is constitutive of the other's affective influence on us, even if that influence confirms our beliefs and commitments.

Gadamer (1975) used the term *horizon* to describe the limits our cultural and historical context exert on our range of vision or capacity for understanding. The horizon demarcates both the scope of our perception, and orients us to our current position in the aforementioned clearing. While we experience our horizon intrapersonally, it is defined interpersonally, recognizable to us only as it comes up against the horizon of the other. The aim of dialogue is intermingling of horizons, where suddenly our view of self, other, and the content under discussion has shifted. When dialogue is fruitful, the results is the birth of shared understanding — a fusion of horizons. Gadamer (1975) explained that to reach understanding in dialogue means not only that a common language has been achieved, but also that we have been, “transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were” (p. 5671). This is not simply a cognitive shift, but a physical and cultural transformation as well. Re-visioning our lived understanding is an embodied historical event.

Returning our gaze to this inquiry, it is essential to note that dialogue is not confined to oral discourse, but can be experienced in the exchange between a person and a text (where the text becomes the other). During my dialogue with the source texts, recognizing the complex influence of my cultural understandings brought into focus the Yogic tradition as a whole. This

awareness informed my textual analysis of the exemplars and highlighted the reductive way Yoga is being understood and applied in U.S. psychology. Admittedly, the ensuing dialogue between the source text themes and the exemplar themes is circumscribed by my cultural and historical context as the interpreter, always and already present in the themes identified. Fidelity with philosophic hermeneutics necessitates that a dialogue between thematic findings begins with a recognition that the themes identified only partially and imperfectly describe both traditions, and that a conversation between their respective concepts, theories, and philosophical underpinnings will be undoubtedly incomplete. However, this does not diminish the worth of this endeavor, as a thematic fusion of horizons may ignite the development of common language by which we might better understand the dynamic contact between traditions and its subsequent socio-political implications.

Thematic Dialogue

Yogic psychology and U.S. psychology. Reflecting back to the thematic findings, the source texts revealed four primary qualities of Yoga relevant to the present discussion. First, Yoga prescribes a life path to achieving one's full potential and includes, but is not limited to, a complex moral framework, theory of mind, conceptualization of suffering and illness, and rich collection of healing technologies. Second, Yoga refers to a phenomenological state of being, or unwavering realization of the self as undifferentiated unified consciousness. Third, Yoga has been disseminated in ways that create confusion and cause harm. And, finally, Yoga has competing factions that take different positions with regard to the ideal sequence of practice, the moral framework of the tradition, and the significance of material reality, the body, and sensuality. Comparatively, the thematic findings of the exemplar articles detailed two qualities of the current discourse in modern U.S. psychology relative to Yoga. First, U.S. psychologists

decontextualized and manualized Yoga to facilitate the appropriation of desirable practices. Second, the reductive use of Yoga as an instrument reflects and reinforces neoliberalism.

From these themes arose two primary questions: First, what is lost in a reductive instrumental understanding of Yoga? And, how might a serious consideration of Yogic psychology shed new light on the tradition of psychology in the context of the U.S.?

In the analysis of the exemplars, it became apparent that the ideologies constituting neoliberalism not only determine how Yoga is understood and applied, they inescapably circumscribe the very horizon of U.S. psychology. Simply, these ideologies are embodied in the dominant theories of mind, mental illness, preferred treatment methods, and what constitutes mental health. For example, in the neoliberal U.S. the ideology of individualism demarcates the scope of the human psyche. Originally Freud's id (subconscious mind), ego (conscious mind), and superego (superconscious mind) reduced an individual's psychology to the regulation of universal drives and impulses. While Freud's model identified mental illness as existing within the individual, his initial discussion of the subconscious and superconscious pointed to the constitutive influence of behaviors and ideas that are culturally proscribed and prescribed within a given era. More specifically, Freud argued that the influence of internalized cultural norms and mores would cause drives classified as immoral to be sublimated or repressed. In more recent years, interpretations of human psychology that have emerged in the U.S. continue to reflect the zeitgeist of their time (Cushman, 1995). This circular relationship is exemplified by the humanistic movement within psychology. In the wake of World War II, rather than wrestle with the psychological implications of genocide or the development of weapons of mass destruction, psychologists in the U.S. embodied a cultural desire to dissociate this human propensity for violence and instead elected to understand human beings as inherently good (Cushman, 1995).

Similarly, this circularity can be seen in the correlation between U.S. psychologists' growing interest in neuropsychology and the birth of neoliberalism in the 1970's and 1980's. Since then, the state of human being has been increasingly interpreted through the lens of neuropsychology, which reduces an individual's psychology to an objective description of complex biochemical processes. The ideology of individualism has reached its pinnacle in neuropsychology, where disorders of mind are not only relegated to the self-contained individual, but have been further decontextualized and explained solely via the brain's structures and functions.

Yoga does not conceive of the self as contained. Instead, the Yoga tradition describes a systemic and sequential process of awakening to pure consciousness as the Self. The Yoga Sûtras espoused a two-tiered description of self, where the first tier is the bodymind and the second tier is true nature as cosmic unified consciousness. The Sûtras explain the tradition of Yoga as a life path for removing ignorance caused by attachment to the bodymind so that one can accurately perceive oneself as this undifferentiated state of consciousness. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika described the whole of material reality, including the individual bodymind, as the manifestation of consciousness. The verses of HYP describe the tradition of Yoga as a process of purifying the bodymind, raising its vibration so it can become a perfect and unrestricted expression of unified consciousness. In either case, the unified, boundless, and infinite self of Yoga is not limited, contained, or separated. Moreover, Yoga describes the root of suffering as the direct result of identifying as an isolated individual with an attachment to a bodymind that is impermanent. This perspective directly opposes the concept of scaffolding a healthy self within U.S. psychology and has shocking implications for the consequences of culturally endorsing the ideology of individualism.

The Yogic tradition makes a distinction between consciousness and the mind, where the

mind is not located solely inside the brain or even the body of the individual. The Yogic tradition includes a layered theory of bodymind that illuminates an inextricable relationship between the elements, senses, and mental faculties. In HYP, Muktibodhananda explained that Mind is composed of 24 elements: five organs of knowledge (*jnanendriya*) five organs of action (*karmendriya*), five elements corresponding to the senses (*tanmatras*), five concrete elements of earth, water, fire, air, and ether (*tattwas*), and *antah karana*. In YS, Satchidananda focused on the four layers of the *antah karana* including: (a) *Manas*, the desiring mind drawn to outside objects/experiences through the senses; (b) *Ahamkara*, the ego or sense of identity that perceives through the lens of I/me/mine; (c) *Buddhi*, the intellectual or discriminating faculty; and (d) *Chittam*, the sum total of all conscious and subconscious perceptions. Yoga's conceptualization captures myriad mental faculties, motives, and psychological processes that are vastly overlooked in U.S. psychology. Moreover, the inextricable relationship between perception, the senses, and both concrete and subtle elements makes the boundary between the individual and the environment porous.

Per U.S. psychology, the brain is regarded as the most significant organ in the human body. This is evident in the explosive attention paid to neuropsychology, or the study of the relationship between the brain and behavior, emotion, and cognition. The appeal of scientific rationality is linked to the certainty, power, and authority of its universal claims. This appeal has a hold on U.S. psychology and continues to demarcate which research practices and healing technologies are preferred in the context of neoliberalism. The rising interest in educational psychology and the development of brain training software are further examples of the stronghold of neuropsychology in the U.S. Describing illness in biochemical and neuropsychological terms, sourcing mental illness in the brain of the self-contained individual,

and dissociating the constitutive relationship between disorders and socio-political life in the U.S. led to the development of instrumental, decontextualized, and manualized healing technologies.

While there are competing interpretations of material reality and significance of the body, a clear distinction between body and mind is relatively absent in the tradition of Yoga as a whole. The Yogic theory of bodymind not only describes body and mind as inextricable, it presents the bodymind as unified with material reality. This union of body, mind, and material existence is evident in Satchidananda's definition of nature as a combination of elements and organs, where the organs are the intellect, mind, senses, and body. Furthermore, from the perspective of Yogic philosophy, believing in the self-contained individual is seen as a cognitive distortion that leads to over-identification with and attachment to the bodymind, which in turn gives rise to many forms of suffering. Moreover, both source texts refer to the body as comprised of sheathes. Muktibodhananda explained that each person has three bodies: (a) material body: *sthula sharira*; (b) subtle/astral body: *sukshma sharira*; and (c) causal/etheric body: *karana sharira*, and that these three bodies are further subdivided in esoteric literature. For example, the *pranic* body is a fundamental component of the *sukshma sharira* that captures the five *vayu*, or the five directions *prana* flows in the body and the physical and psychological functions associated with each. The *pranic* body also provides context for the impact of *pranayama* practices and is said to operate as the link between the physical body and the mind. Yoga further classifies the subjective experience of one's bodymind as constituting five *koshas* of human experience: *anamaya kosha*, *pranamaya kosha*, *manomaya kosha*, *vijnanamaya kosha*, and *anandamaya kosha*. These expressions of bodymind and subjective experience are interwoven and mutually constitutive, where a blockage in one affects all others and prevents

their smooth communication and integration.

The unified theory of bodymind is also evident in the explanation of illness and the collection of healing technologies within the Yogic tradition. Illness is understood as an imbalance that results from desires, habits, environmental factors, and karma. The Yoga Sûtras suggest that ignorance of our true nature results in indiscriminate choices that create desire, which fuels action, which then create habits, and in turn, habits shape our character and the diseases which afflict us. The karmic debt accrued over lifetimes full of indiscriminate choices as well as environmental fallout of our collective choices are considered a further source of illness. Thus, from the Yogic perspective, illness is the result of perceiving experience through the lens of individualism and allowing that perception to guide decision making. The verses of HYP attributed the perception of duality and self-understanding as separate individuals to toxicity within the bodymind. HYP asserts that some imbalances can be corrected through disciplined practice, some can be resolved by receiving *shakti* or energy from the *guru*, and others must simply be endured. Disciplined practice varies depending on the lineage of Yoga, however, regardless of these differences, the healing technologies of Yoga are holistic. These technologies include purification practices or *shatkarma*, breathing practices or *pranayama*, practice of physical postures or *asanas*, gestures or *mudra*, energetic locks or *bandhas*, concentration practices or *dharana*, and specific diet, sleep hygiene, and lifestyle recommendations. The healing technologies of Yoga are not universal but particular, sensitive to the era, environment, stage of life, time of day, and the *sadhaka*'s constitution. This stands in stark contrast with the preferred healing technologies of U.S. psychology, where therapeutic interventions and are said to be universally effective in resolving illnesses regardless of a patient's individual, cultural, or historical context. Moreover, the unified theory of bodymind,

highlights the compartmentalization of psychology and medicine in the U.S.

The mounting research on the mechanisms and neuropsychological processes involved in cognitive and executive functions mirrors the instrumental understanding of the self in U.S. psychology. The self that emerges in the context of neoliberalism is multiple and shallow — diversified, manipulated, and projected to be competitive in an environment where circumstances and opportunities are rapidly shifting (Cushman, 2013c; Sugarman, 2015). In this context, self-concept is akin to a resume, and people understand themselves as a set of assets or separated identity variables — a collection of skills and attributes to hone, cultivate, and invest in. Intellect, in particular, is highly valued as an asset that makes one desirable. The value attributed to intelligence is due in part because intelligence testing secured a position of authority for psychologists within military, occupational, and educational settings and allowed them to have greater influence over public policy (Samelson, 1981; Stolorow, 2011). Intelligence testing, however, further validates the broad application of testing to rank the relative value of students, creates hierarchies that later translate to the type of job opportunities available to graduates, and influences the amount of funding public schools receive from the state. Similarly, executive functions such as attention, cognitive shifting, initiating, self-monitoring, planning, and organizing are granted weighted status in U.S. psychology. This is the result of a political agenda that depends on the capacity to take initiative and demonstrate self-regulation, self-control, and self-reliance to justify the lack of federal funds invested in social services and public resources. Furthermore, both cognitive ability and executive functioning are an essential piece of positive psychology. Positive psychology utilizes cognitivism, or the ideology that individuals are responsible for the outcome of their lives and have the freedom and will to interpret their lives in ways that improve self-esteem and maximize their capacity for

self-actualization (Fowers, 2005; 2010; Sugarman, 2015). Positive psychology is an arm of neoliberalism which ensures that individuals are blamed for their circumstances, diverting attention away from exploitative sociopolitical institutions and practices.

Intelligence, executive functioning, and mental processes in general do not hold the same privileged status in Yogic psychology as in U.S. psychology. In Yogic psychology, intelligence is understood as a barrier and the belief that one possesses knowledge diminishes curiosity and leads to a paralysis of learning. Both source texts linked egoistic identification with one's thoughts and ideas with rigidity and a tendency to overlook or dismiss new information. Yogic philosophy outlined in these texts articulated the distinction between wisdom and knowledge, where wisdom included an experiential component that engendered humility. Additionally, Satchidananda described a form of knowing beyond the mind, where learning is circumvented through the practice of *samyama*. In *samyama*, the perfection of *dharana*, *dyana*, and *samadhi* results in complete and instantaneous understanding of the object of concentration. The experience of *samyama* alludes to the *akashic* records within Yogic philosophy (Frawley, 1990). The *akashic* records are a compendium of all events, experiences, and understandings realized in the past, present, or future. Claims made in both source texts of omniscience associated with realizing the self as unified consciousness is due to obtaining direct access to the *akashic* records without the mind's interference. From the perspective of Yogic theory, knowledge grasped via the mind is limited and conditional. Not only is it possible to know and learn without the mind, this phenomenon is closer to experience than intellectual understanding. To a Western reader, Yogic theories such as these are likely dismissed as a fantastic, illusory, or simply unintelligible because they challenge nearly every assumption about the nature of human being in U.S. psychology.

The ideological and philosophical conflicts between Yoga and U.S. psychology are apparent in the basic purpose of each tradition. The primary aim of U.S. psychology is fundamentally bound with the politics of free-market capitalism, instrumentalism, and individualism. The language of the DSM 5 clearly states that an individual's distress must be severe enough to impair functioning to be considered a diagnosable disorder. This implies that regardless of their altruistic intent, the suffering of the masses is not the principal concern of U.S. psychologists. Despite the discipline's paternalistic presentation of intent, restoring the patient to a functional state is the key measure of therapeutic success. This essentially guarantees corporate access to an available workforce to fuel the loosely restricted generation of profits. Thus, in the context of neoliberalism, psychology is primarily geared towards ensuring that professionals and laborers are adaptive, efficient, productive, and self-reliant members of society. The professional status and financial security of psychologists depends on their demonstrative ability to support the agenda of those in power. In so doing, U.S. psychologists safeguard the privileged interests of the political and corporate elite to the detriment of the vast majority of U.S. citizens (Cushman, 2013b).

The immense interest in and funding for positive psychology further exemplifies the neoliberal agenda in U.S. psychology (Sugarman, 2015). In positive psychology, this agenda operates under the guise of enhancing the life satisfaction of individuals via achievement, acquisition, and recognition. The fleeting enjoyment gained from hollow consumerism and the pursuit of wealth and prestige veils the deeper and long-lasting fulfillment that results from constitutive action (Fowers, 2005; 2010). Integrity, pride, purpose, relational intimacy, and communal belonging are eroded as self, other, and the environment are objectified, commodified, or reduced to instruments of personal gratification. By failing to provide rich and

meaningful interpretations of the state of being, mainstream psychology in the U.S. does little to address the moral ambiguity, confusion, and pain that is often at the heart of intrapsychic suffering and interpersonal conflict and loss. Those psychologists in the U.S. who adopt a nonconformist stance in their clinical practice, research, and scholarship constitute examples of political dissent. However, the professional and personal costs of taking a stand make it difficult to sustain this position under mounting financial pressure and a shrinking social safety net.

Conversely, both Yogic source texts confirm the purpose of the tradition as the realization of human potential for the benefit of all. These texts describe the experience of the Yoga phenomenon as an unwavering state of being associated with the eradication of suffering. Yoga understands moral pain, illness, and suffering in general as the outcome of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain, or taking action while identified with the bodymind. Instead of reducing suffering, the tradition of Yoga seeks to resolve the very root of suffering. Moreover, the verses and sūtras claim that the phenomenon of Yoga is one of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence that results in perpetual contentment and bliss. Thus, the aim of Yoga challenges given understandings in the U.S. with regard to the laws of nature and the limits of human being.

The fundamentally embodied nature of Yogic practice highlights the ideologies of neoliberalism in the U.S. In the U.S., the body is experienced and treated as an objective other, it has become a means to an end, a tool that can be manipulated to meet our individual desires. Bordo (2003) wrote, “The body, far from being some fundamentally stable acultural constant to which we must contrast all culturally relative institutional forms, is constantly ‘in the grip’ as Foucault puts it, of cultural practices” (p. 142). As instrumentalism pervades our methods of inquiry and the theories they produce, it is not surprising that we have adopted an instrumental

interpretation of our somatic experience. Fowers (2010) wrote that, “instrumentalism encourages perceiving everything as a means towards one’s ends, adopting an exploitative stance towards persons and the environment, becoming alienated from others and the world, and it effectively obscures and distorts non-instrumental activity” (p. 102). Instrumentalism, as a cultural ideology, has not only eroded our relationship to the other; rather, it has shaped how we define and experience the self. The body has itself become a resource for exploitation.

In the U.S., Yogic practices (i.e., postures, etc.) removed from the moral framework of Yoga encourage tolerance of harmful sociopolitical circumstances rather than empowering people towards political resistance. Correspondingly, as means are only valuable in so far as they produce a preferred end, then the sensory and affective cues perceived in dialogue are often ignored or overridden when they run counter to these ends. If Americans were to attend to the felt experience of temporal poverty, stress, hopelessness, and isolation experienced as participants in a neo-liberal society (Sugarman, 2015), it would undermine the status quo. Attending to our embodied experience is a dangerous and subversive act that would likely incite people to demand social change. The development and widespread use of excitotoxins to exponentially increase the flavor of processed foods, or the constant stream of visual and auditory stimulation made available by the entertainment industry, serve as dissociative tools. Inundated with sensory stimulation, our capacity to tolerate a full range of human experience has atrophied. While we are unpracticed at sensing dissonant affective embodied experience in the U.S., we are saturated with the tendency to maximally attend to the body as the arena for sense gratification. Feeding this endless pursuit of sensory stimulation obfuscates the pervasive experience of moral/affective pain, often misdiagnosed as psychological disorder.

The conceptual isomer to sense indulgence is the ascetic denial and manipulation of the

body. Psychologists in the U.S. come up against a dualistic heritage when attempting to sense their affective embodied experience. While moral/affective pain feels intolerable, enduring certain kinds of pain and discomfort is not only permissible, it is desirable as it grants social status to the practitioner. Bordo (2003) articulated how the separation of the material from the mental or spiritual aspects of human experience led to understanding of the physical body as: (a) an other; (b) confining and limiting, (c) the source of unpredictable emotions and sensual desires that disrupt or distract from logic and rationality; and (d) that which subject to aging and death beyond the will to control. This led to a cultural resentment of the body, a desire to kill experience, and separate from or overpower the senses. The attempt to transcend physical limitations through deprivation as is practiced by anorectics, or by overriding the body's cues in the case of compulsive marathon runners and body builders who push themselves to the point of injury, are examples of this cultural trend towards disembodiment (Bordo, 2003).

While this section was in no way comprehensive, it was an attempt to articulate the self, illnesses, healers, and healing technologies of Yogic psychology and allow them to call into question those facets of U.S. psychology. What follows is a brief articulation of moral and corresponding theoretical conflicts within the Yoga tradition. This is preparation for allowing the moral framework of Yoga to call into question the moral assumptions embedded in the institutions and practices of U.S. psychology.

The moral vision of Yoga. Both source texts identified that an incomplete and decontextualized dissemination of Yoga causes confusion and harm, though they did not share a cohesive description of what would constitute a complete transmission of the Yogic tradition. This is linked to the texts originating from divergent lineages of Yoga, specifically Vedanta and Tantra. Vedanta and Tantra take different positions with regard to the ideal sequence of practice,

the moral framework of the tradition, and the significance of material reality, the body, and sensuality.

The Yoga Sûtras are an expression of Vedic Yoga, where fidelity with the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* is considered essential, and practice divorced from this moral framework is believed to cause harm. The importance of *yama* and *niyama* arose from a fundamental understanding that the ever-changing names and forms in existence, or *maya*, is an illusion that obscures the underlying reality of one never-changing unified consciousness. From the perspective of *maya*, the bodymind and sensuality (as an expression of material existence) must necessarily be an obstacle to awakening, and therefore the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* safeguard against their negative influences.

Conversely, the verses of HYP are an expression of Tantric Yoga, where the imposition of a moral framework is believed to create intrapsychic conflict and harm, and spontaneous fidelity with the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* is thought to be the natural result of purification and practice. Tantra describes the ever-changing names and forms in existence as varied expressions of one never-changing unified consciousness. From this perspective, all material existence including the bodymind is sacred as a manifestation or embodiment of consciousness. Moreover, Tantric Yoga intentionally utilizes sensuality in the process of awakening.

The differences between these lineages raised a number of questions including: Does Tantra's Hatha Yoga constitute a secular effort within the Yoga tradition? Does the separation of Yoga from its moral framework within Hatha Yoga partially account for its popularity as the dominant form of Yoga practiced in the U.S.? Does this amoral presentation of Yoga account for the ease with which it was appropriated by U.S. psychologists? Furthermore, how does an

amoral dissemination of Yoga produce different results within varying cultural contexts?

The secular appeal of Yogic theory and method when stripped of its moral framework would be instinctual for a U.S. audience. As I stated previously, when I initially began studying Yoga, the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* felt daunting, and discovering Tantra and Hatha Yoga was accompanied by a sense of liberation. While my response was undoubtedly related to having been steeped in secularism as a given and culturally cherished ideology, it also captured my aversion to the link between puritanical Christian values and the cycle of repression and indulgence I witnessed as a child.

I experienced benefit from attempting to align my actions with prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama*. The hermeneutic literature analysis I conducted in this study raised serious concerns about the social and political consequences that an amoral presentation of Yoga might have in the U.S. The framework of philosophic hermeneutics states that it is impossible to remove a tradition from the context that constitutes it. This is evident in HYP's frequent, indirect mention of Yogic norms. While Muktibodhananda repeatedly warned that rigid adherence to *yama* and *niyama* would result in intrapsychic splitting, she frequently engaged in a tacit endorsement of Yogic values including: non-violence, honesty, generosity, humility, justice, discipline, renunciation, asceticism, austerity, self-study, purity, fidelity, contentment, surrender, endurance, and the purifying influence of suffering. The implicit presentation of these values gave an impression of their inherent goodness, and suggested Muktibodhananda assumed they would be widely accepted. This exemplifies the hermeneutic notion that when left unrecognized our unconscious moral understandings get projected outward as universal common sense.

As evidenced by the second shared source text theme, both Satchidananda and

Muktibodhananda expressed concerns regarding the reductive and decontextualized dissemination of Yoga. Both authors warned that Yogic practice can bestow immense power to the practitioner, and misuse or abuse of this power risks harm to self and other. Satchidananda used the discovery of atomic energy as an analogy, explaining how the fierce one pointed concentration of scientists like Einstein and Rutherford allowed them to understand the nature of the atom. He described this as a spontaneous experience of *samyama* and remarked:

... the benefit of this contemplation is understanding of the inner secrets and powers of the object of contemplation. But what will you do with that power? The danger can be easily realized by seeing how atomic energy has been used for destructive bombs instead of soothing balms. There is a danger in getting all these extraordinary powers. If samadhi is practiced without the proper moral background, the result will be dangerous.
(p. 32)

Not surprisingly, YS placed greater emphasis on the moral framework of *yama* and *niyama* to prevent destructive egoistic drives from derailing the practice of Yoga.

The commentary of HYP focused more heavily on the importance of highlighting the purpose of the tradition when disseminating Yoga. Muktibodhananda asserted that the true aim of Yoga is the perpetual experience or awareness of the self as unified consciousness, an idea that is widely ignored in the West. She wrote:

In the last fifty years, with the revival of Yoga in the West, it seems that the real aim of Yoga has been overlooked... Today, Yoga is generally practiced to improve or restore health, to reduce stress, to prevent the body from ageing, to build up the body, or to beautify it. (p. 27)

Here, Muktibodhananda pointed out how mistaking the side effects of Yoga for its purpose reinforces egoistic attachment to the bodymind. Moreover, both source texts refer to the ego, or identification with a self-contained bodymind as the greatest barrier to awakening. This has staggering implications concerning the decontextualized application of Yogic practices in U.S. psychology and raises the question: How might a serious consideration of the moral framework of Yoga call into question the neoliberal ideologies circumscribing the institutions and practices of U.S. psychology?

The moral vision of Yoga and U.S. psychology. The Yogic understanding of ego directly conflicts with the constitutive ideology of individualism in U.S. psychology. In order to avoid a reductive understanding of the ego of Yoga, it may help to discuss it from the perspective of the *antah karana*. The ego of Yoga is most often associated with the *ahamkara*, or the part of the mind that processes everything perceived through the lens of I/me/mine. While *buddhi*, the intellectual or discriminating faculty, might easily be misunderstood as neutral given the ontological assumptions of U.S. psychology, when considering the *buddhi* in relation to the ego, it could present as discrimination between what is me and not me, mine and not mine, or what is desirable and undesirable to me. Here, *manas*, the desiring faculty, drawn to outside objects or experiences through the interaction between the five *tanmatras*, *tattwas*, and the senses, points back to the role of attachment and aversion in reinforcing the ego. Lastly, the *chittam*, or the sum total of all conscious and subconscious impressions made via all experiences in our past and present lives, fuels the faculty of *manas*.

Satchidananda explained the cyclical relationship between *samskaras*, *vasanas*, and *vritti* as the driving force behind the accumulation of *karma* (currently experienced or not yet realized consequences of *samskaras*) and the impetus for reincarnation (the endless cycle of birth and

death that continues until we cease accruing *karma* and endure the effects of remaining *karma*). He explained that *samskara* are created when we identify with our experiences or perceptions. The *chittam*'s collection of *samskaras* result in the development of *vasana*. The *vasana*, give rise to *vritti* that spur further action. Thus the cycle flows: accumulated *samskara* create *vasana*, *vasana* give rise to *vritti*, *vritti* when acted upon leave further *samskara* or deepen those impressions already present, thus reinforcing *vasana*, and so on and so forth. The five *jnanendriya* and *karmendriya* facilitate the interwoven faculties of the *antah karana*. Hence, ego is not an isolated perception or faculty of mind; rather it is akin to the ideology of individualism that influences the entirety of the bodymind's complex, layered, and interconnected processes.

The ego of Yoga is, perhaps, a more porous version of the self-contained individual of U.S. psychology. In the U.S., we cherish our sense of autonomy, we relish the freedom to pursue our desire for personal fulfillment, our inalienable right to choose. However, Yogic philosophy would suggest that this commitment to the ideology of individualism is the root cause of psychological suffering. The tradition of Yoga would view the hyper-individualism of U.S. culture as fueled by a futile, self-perpetuating, and unceasing pursuit of fleeting pleasures derived from the bodymind's impermanent somatic and affective states. Moreover, the lasting unshakable bliss and contentment associated with realizing our self as pure consciousness appears as naïve, imaginary, or wholly unrecognizable in the face of widely known or commonly accepted scientific understandings in the U.S.

Both Satchidananda and Muktibodhananda relied on the language of quantum physics to make the concept of unified consciousness more accessible to Western readers. Satchidananda alludes to the tendency to privilege Western scientific terminology in the following remark:

If I use the term “spirit” or “Self” you might hesitate to believe me, but if the physicist says the wall is nothing but energy you will believe that. So, using the physicists language, there is nothing but energy everywhere. Even the atom is a form of energy. The same energy appears in different forms to which we also give different names. So the form and name are just different versions of the same energy. (p. 8)

Einstein coined the term superimposition to describe the subatomic building blocks of our material universe existing as particles and wave-forms simultaneously. Quantum physicists have learned that electrons are not bound by space-time restrictions, and are quite literally omnipresent. Interestingly, this discovery made tracking the movement of electrons immeasurable. This understanding is reminiscent of the Yogic assertion that knowledge achieved through the mind is always partial or incomplete.

Quantum physicists have scientifically demonstrated what *yogis* have taught for centuries—that our perception of a fixed, tangible existence is more a reflection of what we are capable of perceiving, and less a measure of what is real or true. Instead, what we experience or understand as concrete is actually a field of infinite fluid potential energy, or in Yogic terms, consciousness. Yogic philosophy contends that the reality we perceive is what we have come to assume is there and is ultimately the product of our cultural and historical understandings. The Yogic tradition not only claims that it is possible to have a direct experience of non-duality, it prescribes a path to becoming established in the unceasing awareness of this reality. Nonetheless, despite the fact that quantum physicists have made discoveries that echo the ancient Yogic insights, the tradition of Yoga is still dismissed as religious primarily due to its moral framework. This evoked a number of questions including: Do the cherished ideologies of individualism and instrumentalism in U.S. culture obstruct an understanding of bliss beyond the

senses or of a self beyond the bodymind? Given our commitment to freedom, autonomy, and self-determination and our desire to set ourselves apart, to be recognized as unique or exceptional, what motivation would people in the U.S. have to persist in a practice that undermines these norms and mores and risks the loss of a cohesive sense of self? Are U.S. citizens able to recognize the value of contentment, and would they be willing to surrender the pursuit of personal gain and temporary but immediate gratification to attain it? Would people in the U.S. have an interest in practicing Yoga if the virtues of discipline, asceticism, austerity, and renunciation were central to its dissemination? Is the realization of Yoga as a phenomenon desirable to people in the U.S.? This opens up a line of inquiry that will be discussed further in the concluding section of this chapter.

Another subject where Yogic values call into question the neoliberal ideologies of U.S. psychology is the role of the *guru* in disseminating Yoga. The commentaries on of both source texts discuss the power and importance of the *guru* to protect students from confusion or harm and their role in prescribing practices that address the unique needs of each student. The *guru*'s individualized instruction differs significantly from the instruction received by patients and students in U.S. psychology and commercial Yoga. In these two contexts, the practice has either been manualized or sequenced with the aim of increasing flexibility in a targeted area of the body or creating a seamless flow between different physical postures that may or may not be paired with breathing and concentration practices. In either case, the practice is universally administered to students with variable skill levels, constitutions, and unique dispositional needs. While there are some credentialing procedures for yoga instructors in the U.S., the power and authority granted to yoga teachers in the U.S. is not based on merit, wisdom, or their degree of mastery in regard to the Yogic tradition. This discrepancy is even more apparent in U.S.

psychologists, most of whom receive only minimal training to administer interventions that incorporate manualized and decontextualized Yogic practices.

The ethics of enlightenment, or the entitled right to seek out and possess new knowledge, led to the imperialistic drive to collect the intellectual property and healing technologies of the other (Smith, 1999). The entitlement of the Enlightenment era fundamentally shaped cultural development in the West, and makes sense of the assumed right to teach and practice Yoga without supervision or guidance from a qualified master. Some might argue that Yoga was introduced into the U.S. by teachers who welcomed its widespread study and use. However, the readiness to subject Yoga to the reductive and decontextualizing influence of scientific methods cannot be understood outside the globalization of Western ideologies and methods of inquiry. The global status of Yoga depended on the verification of its instrumental worth, since the approval of the West protected the tradition from falling into obscurity. Based on the concerns raised by the authors of both source texts it does not appear that the *gurus* who initially brought Yoga to the U.S. anticipated the impact of individualism, instrumentalism, capitalism, and scientific proceduralism in U.S. culture would have on the tradition.

Resistance to the restraints of practicing under the tutelage of a *guru* highlights the Yogic values of sacrifice and humility. Yogic theory suggests that the surrender of one's will and unquestioning fidelity to the teacher's instruction enhances the efficacy of practice. These are values that, in some ways, have fallen by the wayside in mainstream U.S. culture and now appear as nearly unrecognizable. However, in Western medicine and mental health, patients tend to place their trust in providers as experts. As psychologists, particularly those who hold doctoral degrees, are licensed and/or board certified, and have diplomas on our walls, we are often revered as experts by the patients who seek our services. Because U.S. psychologists hold this

inherent trust based on privilege, power, and credentials, patients trust that psychologists are a) providing the correct treatments, b) providing the highest quality of care, c) holding almost absolute knowledge about their particular needs and symptoms. With that near-absolute trust in mind, for psychologists who inappropriately (i.e., in an appropriated or abbreviated manner that is in opposition to the true intention of the practice) apply Yoga-based interventions, they may be exploiting the relationship with the patient. This, eventually, may produce more suffering which guarantees the role or job of the psychologist, further contributing to the systemic oppression supported by the neoliberal agenda. In addition, this unknowing support of systemic oppression may also promote complacency, rather than healing, among patients. This allows for development of complacency and eventual complicity among psychologists as they continue to unknowingly do harm to the very population they aim to help.

In the neoliberal U.S., the ideology of free market capitalism has maximized competition and commodified every aspect of life. Self and others are seen as collections of skills and assets that more or less support our ability to seize opportunities for personal and professional gain, legislation privileges the corporate elite, and the stripping of our social safety net diverts responsibility for oppressive circumstances from institutions to the individual. In this context, sacrifice and humility appear naïve, if not dangerous. Yogic philosophy suggests that without sacrifice, humility, and surrender, all the effort of practice is squandered on the ego, plunging us further into the futile pursuit of pleasure and attempt to stave off pain. While the surrendering one's will to another can be abused, the scenario described in Yogic literature perfectly captures the insatiable and desperate lived experience of individuals in the U.S. Moreover, Yogic virtues such as pacifism, honesty, generosity, and purity might interfere with competitive strategies that ensure survival in the neoliberal U.S. There is little to no discussion of the personal, relational,

communal, and environmental losses that accompany the quiet disappearance of these virtues in mainstream U.S. psychology.

The ego-perpetuating nature of action fueled by attachment and aversion brings to light the complex and seemingly contradictory value attributed to suffering in the Yoga tradition. The philosophical precept of *tapas* discussed in both source texts features the merit of suffering. *Tapas* has a three-pronged definition; understood as the fire of will, the willingness to endure the flames of suffering, and the purification that occurs from being burned. To illustrate this concept, Yogic literature often uses an analogy of heating metal to remove impurities. While suggesting that eradicating the root of suffering necessitates the wholehearted experience of it may appear contradictory, it points to a nuanced psychological phenomenon: that which one denies, dismisses, or dissociates exerts a stronger influence on behavior than if it were made conscious.

In U.S. psychology, our primary aim is the relief of suffering. However, in the context of neoliberalism, this suffering may be a normal response to abnormal circumstances or a symptom of systemic oppression. By treating the symptom, perhaps we are unconsciously endeavoring to avoid the painful consequences of neoliberalism or to escape our own sense of helplessness to change them. By exclusively working to relieve symptoms of suffering rather than its etiology, psychologists are able to unconsciously avoid confronting the consequences of unaddressed injustices that they may be unknowingly perpetuating. Ultimately, this aim to reduce suffering may perpetuate harm to the sufferer, which is the very act described by the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2016) in which psychologists are told to do no harm. This allows the practitioner to also alleviate their own potential discomfort with facing the systemic oppression that causes the suffering of others. In this way, suffering begets

suffering, and avoidance becomes an analgesic that fails to adequately treat the source of suffering. If psychologists, the alleged benefactors of mental health, are unknowingly perpetuating suffering because of unexamined cultural and societal expectations or values, this creates an opportunity for a cycle large-scale suffering, masking of that suffering, and avoidance of examining the etiology of the suffering.

It is important to note the role of ignorance in this process. This is not a claim that U.S. psychologists are maliciously enacting harm upon their clients or patients. Rather, it is a call for examination of the role of psychologists in the unknowing perpetuation of suffering despite well-intended interventions to help. Instead of attempting to simply relieve suffering, how could the Yogic value of suffering shed light on this paternalistic practice and foster a recognition of our shared suffering and helplessness. Perhaps by not allowing our clients suffer, to wrestle with sociopolitical sources of their distress, we provide only temporary respite and enable the apathy and passivity that characterizes people in the U.S. Food, drugs, and technologically advanced forms of entertainment are broadly used to dissociate from the experience of life in the U.S. Perhaps Americans need to face heightened loss, discomfort, and suffering to incite the drive to enact change. This mirrors Yogic philosophy surrounding the purifying influence of suffering.

In the context of neoliberalism, the concept of suffering being reparative could be easily abused. The increasing interest in practices that cultivate distress tolerance might be used to teach patients to better cope with systemic oppression rather than resist it. This is captured in cognitive ideology as a component of positive psychology, where individuals are seen as self-enterprising agents with the will and freedom to selectively attend only to thoughts that support increased life satisfaction through accomplishing personal and professional goals. Similarly, in the context of neoliberalism, the philosophical tenant “as you think, so you

become” seems to support cognitive ideology. Conversely, when situated in its traditional context of Yogic philosophy, this tenant does not confirm the cognitivist illusion that our interpretations are separate from us and can be swapped out for those we prefer. Instead, the Yogic precept confirms the hermeneutic understanding that our interpretations shape us, inform our choices, and constitute our bodymind.

While more overtly expressed in HYP than in YS, the relationship between the phenomenon of unified consciousness and the value attributed to justice and harmony was present in both texts. The understanding that all of existence is precious as an expression of consciousness stands in stark contrast with the instrumental understanding of life upon which neoliberalism depends. The ideology of instrumentalism has become so pervasive in U.S. culture that essentially every aspect of our lives is understood as either a means or an end. The ideology of instrumentalism has diminished the worth of human being and the world we live in, justifying the commodification and privatization of public and environmental resources. Moral understandings are evaluated for their instrumental value in the pursuit of selfish desires. In this context, justice and harmony are understood as valuable only when they further the self-centered agenda of individuals, corporations, special interest groups, or political parties. Conversely, Yogic theory asserts that all the names and forms in existence are expressions of the same unified consciousness. This principle is expressed in Yogic values like *asteya* and *aparigraha*, which describe not sharing or taking more than you need as a form of theft, depriving others of what they need. This perspective challenges the right to pursue limitless wealth and to hoard resources for personal use (Muktibodhananda, 1993; Satchidananda, 1978; Smith, 1999). Namely, this contradicts the quintessential American dream, the concept of manifest destiny, and the constitutional ethos of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. Satchidananda noted that

the world belongs to all sentient and non-sentient beings alike, or perhaps that we all belong to it and to each other. The moral framework and phenomenology of Yoga present poverty and violence as acts of self-harm. If all existence is an expression of unified consciousness then justice and harmony become an automatic expression of self-preservation.

The moral framework and philosophy of Yoga underscores the lack of moral significance, heightened pressure, and absence of relational depth and intimacy that describe the subjective experience of life in the U.S. The erosion of trust and community in the context of neoliberalism has narrowed the scope of imagination and makes these Yogic values appear as a picturesque, but unreachable, utopia. For example, Satchidananda's claim that what is due to us will come without our worrying, seeking, or chasing after it appears impossibly idealistic in U.S. culture. What would it be like to experience freedom from the egoistic pressure to secure one's basic needs? Is it possible to sustain the fearless confidence of *vairagya* without the cultural support for renunciation or a communal willingness to pool resources? Perhaps the teachers who brought Yoga to the U.S. hoped the moral framework of Yoga might counteract the ego-inflating sociopolitical climate of the U.S.

From Appropriation to Appreciation

The thematic dialogue in this chapter is an invitation to U.S. psychologists to comprehensively consider the tradition of Yoga. Neither uncritical acceptance nor the premature desire to assert opinion would have generated an ample understanding of Yoga. Instead, I sought to strengthen Yogic theory, philosophy, psychology, and morality by asking generative questions about the dynamic way Yoga and U.S. psychology intersect (Gadamer, 1975). From a hermeneutic perspective, a foreign tradition can be understood only in relation to how it compares or contrasts with what is familiar. By wrestling with Yogic theory, philosophy,

psychology, and morality, by trying to understand how it might better describe and heal human beings, the tradition of U.S. psychology in the context of neoliberalism became more recognizable. Ideally, dialogue stimulates disciplinary reflexivity that strengthens our traditions by clarifying our convictions. The reflective process stimulated in dialogue is constitutive of other's influence on us, regardless of whether that influence confirms or challenges our beliefs. Rather than reify our own tradition by appropriating decontextualized concepts and practices, a more ethical approach might be to use the inspiration and appreciation we feel in response to the tradition of Yoga change how we understand and practice U.S. psychology. Interestingly, the intersection of Yoga and hermeneutics highlights a number of shared tenants and ideologies between these traditions and directs our attention to the philosophic root of U.S. psychology.

Yoga and hermeneutics. Post-modern philosophic hermeneutics shares a number of ideological perspectives with the tradition of Yoga. These tenants include, but are not limited to: the fundamentally embodied nature of practice, embedded and constitutive nature of language, ideas, perception, ego, illness, and preferred healing technologies, the cultivation of humility, and the value of subjective inquiry.

Satchidananda describes a number of tenants in YS that highlight an embedded and constitutive understanding of ideas and language. His discussion of *bija mantras*, or seed syllables, as having the power to both describe and manifest specific phenomenological states exemplifies this understanding. In his commentary on sūtra 1.27 he wrote, "In Sanskrit there is a term 'padartha.' Colloquially, it means 'thing,' but literally it means the 'pada' and 'artha': the thing and its meaning. The name and form of a thing are inseparable" (p. 42). This is akin to constitutive nature of language as articulated by both Heidegger and Gadamer. Philosophic hermeneutics understands language not as a vehicle for meaning, but constitutive of the world it

describes. The vibratory nature of spoken language influences us on a cellular level, shaping both our social and biological development. We hear our native tongue even when we are in the womb, its signature prosody envelopes our very becoming, and this process continues throughout our lives. Gadamer asserted that a fusion of horizons might be understood as an achievement of common language, or, “a coming-into-language of the content” (p. 5668). From a hermeneutic perspective, tradition itself is comprised of an evolution of linguistic interpretation, the perpetual development or reformulation of cultural understandings crystalized as language. Fowers (2010) discussed the value of constitutive versus instrumental action. Instrumental action is only valuable in terms of achieving one’s ends, but constitutive action is valuable regardless of the results. This is similar to the emphasis in both source texts on surrendering attachment to personal gain, even to the results of practice. I do not highlight these similarities to encourage appropriating Yogic practices, but to posit that a re-commitment to the philosophical understandings of our own tradition is one way U.S. psychologists might be influenced by Yoga.

Similarly, the tradition of Yoga recognizes the contextual nature of language and ideas. Satchidananda described difference between truth and interpretation, explaining that truth always comes to us pre-interpreted and emblematic of the cultural historical context from which it emerged. Paradoxical to his commentary on *bija* mantras, his commentary on sūtra 1.32 described how language always incompletely or inaccurately captures experience. This mirrors the hermeneutic understanding that all interpretation and interpretive traditions are imperfect, incomplete, and in need of perpetual revision. Muktibodhananda (1993) echoed this hermeneutic tenant, explaining that from a Yogic perspective, all disciplines developed with the mind are seen as limited and conditional.

The embedded nature of human being is another place that Yoga and hermeneutics

overlap. Both Yoga and hermeneutics are committed to healing technologies that treat each person as unique and thus resist being manualized. For example, Gadamer's concept of dialogue is not a universal method, but a spontaneous experience whose fluid unpredictability does not result in objective truth. Gadamerian dialogue is a rigorous moral discourse that features the dynamic influence of embedded or embodied ideologies and results in critical cultural awareness. Similarly, the importance of the *guru* tailoring practice to individual needs and the author's concern about the decontextualized and reductive way Yoga is being disseminated in the West is evidence that a manualized approach to the tradition is not philosophically syntonetic. Both authors repeatedly insist that the practice of Yoga is not universal. They discussed how different approaches to practice are particularly effective during certain stages of life or within specific eras in history. The sensitivity of Yogic practice to the environment, time of day, and the practitioner's constitution, diet, and lifestyle highlights a gap in mainstream psychology in the U.S. that hermeneutic theorists have been calling attention to for over 40 years. Again, Yoga exemplifies how U.S. psychology might develop healing technologies aligned with Heidegger's (1967) ontology of being-in-the world, or Foucault's (1973; 1975; 1978) descriptions of personhood as being always and already in-the-grip of sociopolitical influences particular to their era. In this way, both Yoga and philosophic hermeneutics recognize the cyclical and fundamentally embedded relationship between selves, illnesses, healers, and technologies.

Evident in the previous section on thematic dialogue, both Yoga and hermeneutics drew attention to the sociopolitical context of U.S. psychology and elicited the awareness of the violence caused by neoliberalism. In a way, the thematic dialogue itself permitted Yoga to influence U.S. psychology through its impact on myself as the interpreter. By situating the findings in a moral discourse about the impact of neoliberal values and ideologies, the complicity

of U.S. psychologists in utilizing or promoting concepts and practices that reify neoliberalism comes to light. Another way to allow Yoga to influence U.S. psychology is to continue and expand the hermeneutic deliberation around our commitment to neoliberalism.

Both Yoga and hermeneutics engender humility. The Yogic understanding of the limits of knowledge is an attempt to circumvent egoistic attachment to one's ideas. Furthermore, Yoga's deconstruction of the ego strips away arrogance and certainty, culminating in a perpetual experience of selfless unity. Similarly, Gadamer (1975) said, "hermeneutic consciousness does not culminate in a methodological sureness of itself...but in the readiness for experience that distinguishes the experienced man from the man captivated by dogma" (p. 5436). Gadamer asserted that the perfection of experience *is* humility, or the awareness of incomplete understanding that fuels an openness to new experiences. To adequately appreciate the nature of experience is to understand the limits of power, self-knowledge, planning, and reason. Instead of privileging knowledge as the collection of facts, dialogue asks us to value experience, as it prepares us to learn. Thus, both Yoga and hermeneutics ask us to revise and redefine the meaning of scholarship, authority, and professionalism.

The practices of Yoga and philosophic hermeneutics are fundamentally embodied. Yogic practices engage the body to alter and elevate the human psyche. Further, the emphasis on diet, lifestyle, and environment highlights Yoga's holistic and constitutive world view. Likewise, Gadamerian dialogue is an embodied interpretive art that requires attention to the full range of affective experience. From a hermeneutic perspective, our thoughts and emotions register in the body and are part of an interpretive system. Like packaged cultural narratives, they communicate embodied values and understandings (Shweder, 1994). The practice of dialogue requires that our affective and somatic responses to self, other, and the content of discussion are

experienced as feedback systems that invite us to more deeply reflect on how we breathe life into these cultural values and understandings through our sociopolitical practices (Maroda, 2005).

The embedded or embodied theory and practice of Yoga and hermeneutics are inextricably related to the value attributed to subjective inquiry in both traditions. Yogic science is rooted in an understanding of direct experience and the tradition as a whole was built upon centuries of subjective inquiry and experimentation. Gadamer's fundamentally interpretive world view mirrors the authority given to subjectivity in Yoga. If our values and understandings constitute our very being (Cushman, 2005), then all inquiry can be understood as an act of intersubjective interpretation. One way U.S. psychologists might welcome the influence of Yoga is to recognize all forms of inquiry and knowledge as subjective, to release their position of ideological superiority, and to question whether Western scientific methods are exclusively appropriate for the study of the human psyche. This cannot be accomplished through abstraction, and instead requires concrete actions such as structural and political reform guided by an understanding of the legislative process as moral discourse, increased funding for hermeneutic research, and the use of hermeneutic interpretations in policy-making.

Language about Yoga. An additional way U.S. psychologists may better acknowledge the Yogic tradition is to adapt the use of language about Yoga. Even as language within empirical publication has shifted to reflect respectful, people-first language per APA, we may also seek to adapt our language about Yoga and the interventions and practices we take from the Yogic tradition. For example, if Yogic practices are used in a clinical intervention, it may be beneficial to refer to this as Yoga-based, Yoga-inspired, or adapted from Yoga, rather than terming it Yoga. By adapting language, it may be possible to (a) call attention to the fact that Yoga is not being implemented in its philosophic entirety, (b) alert patients that while something

is adapted from Yoga, it is partial rather than comprehensive, and (c) pay due respect to the Yogic tradition by acknowledging the practice of culling and applying pieces of Yoga in a way that is deemed effective by Western research methodologies. In some ways, using labels like Yoga-based may act as a reference to the Yogic tradition, similarly to how we might credit a source in a literature search so as to avoid plagiarism. This does not, of course, excuse the culling of Yoga for promotion of suffering, the appropriation of Yoga, or the dissociation of Yoga practices from their origin, but it may help to raise awareness about these processes within U.S. psychology.

There are subjects on which hermeneutic and Yogic thought diverge. For example, Yoga embraces the absolute as a theoretical possibility. Yoga's concept of unified consciousness, the state of being beyond the bodymind, undifferentiated by time and space, appears to conflict with the embedded ontology of hermeneutics. The tradition of philosophy in the West distinguished itself as separate from religion. Interestingly, the instrumental view of the bodymind is foreign to hermeneutics, yet is common to both Vedic Yoga and mainstream U.S. psychology. While Tantra understands the body as embedded, Vedanta understands the bodymind as both a veil covering the true non-duality and an instrument of awakening. Both Tantric Yoga and hermeneutics share an embedded ontology of human being, however, Yoga further developed a philosophy of absolute unity, whereas hermeneutics has resisted such an undertaking. While a number of negative consequences have resulted from absolutist thinking and universal claims, the refusal of hermeneutic theorists to consider what binds all human beings together, or what binds everything in existence together, may contribute to existential angst and a failure to establish belonging that may further fuel individualism in the U.S.

Muktibodhananda (1993) remarked on the Paradox of absolute unity as a reality

unknowable by the mind. She noted:

There can be no ultimate reality. Nor can there be only one way to realize it...when the mind is completely dissolved, when the individual ego evaporates, and when there is no more 'I', 'you', 'he', 'she', then who is going to see whom? Who is going to know whom. (p. 414)

Muktibodhananda further explained being as a way of knowing beyond the mind. The cosmology of Yoga highlights a similar paradox. Yoga understands the origin of the universe as undifferentiated pure consciousness, or *purusha*; peaceful and undisturbed (Frawley, 1990). In this state of being, there is no recognition of self or other. It is said that duality (or all of material reality) sprung from *purusha*'s desire to know itself, and thus, unified consciousness differentiated into the infinite and ever-changing names and forms of existence. The paradox of how desire could arise from undifferentiated state of absolute contentment and bliss highlights the complex role of paradox within the Yogic tradition.

In keeping with the hermeneutic theory that all traditions are incomplete, it becomes relevant to ask whether U.S. psychology might address gaps in the tradition of Yoga. In HYP, Muktibodhananda repeatedly asserts that Yoga goes further than psychology because it does not stop with the analysis of emotions or thoughts, and takes the practitioner beyond the mind. However, reading and re-reading the source literature elicited the following questions: Does the sole focus on returning to a state of unified consciousness risk spiritual bypassing and in-so-doing dissociate intrapersonal factors that may later interfere with achieving the principal aim of Yoga? Is psychological processing truly irrelevant, or paradoxically, is it possible that humans need to scaffold a healthy ego to tolerate the visceral uncertainty of transcending it? Might the hermeneutic understanding of emotions as conveying cultural morals and

understandings be aligned with value of welcoming suffering in Yoga? Is it possible that following an intrapersonal thread of meaning to its contextual end might present opportunities to cultivate self-awareness and respond instead of react? Furthermore, does awareness of the sociopolitical context of suffering spur actions aligned with the Yogic values of justice and harmony? These are not hypothetical questions, but rather a genuine invitation for further exploration.

While a return to hermeneutic theory and practice is one way U.S. psychologists could be influenced by the tradition of Yoga, such a renaissance would disrupt the status quo in essentially every domain of life in the United States. Hermeneutic theory highlights a problematic relationship with time in the United States. Sugarman (2015) articulated how the neoliberal agenda, the advance of technology, and the ever-increasing expectations of an individualistic and capitalistic culture have compounded the relationship with time. The quickening pace of life in the U.S. runs contrary to the slowing down required for the practice of oral or textual dialogue and interpretation. Moreover, dialogue does not guarantee results, and its value is constitutive rather than instrumental. In a data-driven, solution focused culture such as modern U.S. psychology, this value may be lost. The sociopolitical integration of hermeneutic theory and practice may be more aligned with the values of socialism than those of capitalism, and could be viewed as a lethal threat by those who profit most from the neoliberal agenda.

U.S. psychologists themselves profit from neoliberalism. It is unclear whether U.S. psychologists would be willing to sacrifice their privileged positions, or discontinue the use of culturally appropriated concepts and practices. Many psychologists have built a fortune by developing methodologies and tiered certification programs rooted in the intellectual property of the Other. The integration of hermeneutic theory and practice does not lend itself well to the

academic pressures of publication for scholars of U.S. psychology. Hermeneutic theory and practice makes clear the finitude of our traditions, methods, and understandings, and asks us to surrender the security of ideological superiority, to abandon our claim to truth, to shift from knowledge as property to knowledge as a shared lived experience. This study invites a discussion for attempts to participate more fully in the Yogic tradition, rather than attempting to possess the aspects of Yoga that fit neatly into personal, professional, and broader cultural norms. Further, a rich discussion and awakening can be found if U.S. psychologists are willing cast off complacency and privilege to recognize knowing or unknowing complicity in the neoliberal agenda, and commit to disciplinary integrity, even at the cost of practices that sustain intellectual imperialism. Integrating moral discourse into clinical practice, and subjective hermeneutic inquiry into academic research is an example of disciplinary integrity and an expression of the influence of Yoga on U.S. psychology.

CHAPTER IX: CONCLUSION

Over the course of this inquiry, I interpreted Yoga as: a complex and multifaceted tradition with its own system of psychology, a phenomenological state of being, and an artifact of U.S. psychology. Through my interpretation of source literature, I treated Yoga as a system of references to a centuries-long discourse concerning a tradition of subjective inquiry relevant to contemporary life in the U.S. Likewise, through my interpretation of the exemplars, I treated Yoga as a selection of decontextualized concepts and practices appropriated by U.S. psychologists which inadvertently communicate the ideologies of neoliberalism and reproduce the sociopolitical arrangements of contemporary life in the U.S.

My primary aim in conducting this study was to explore whether an encounter can occur between traditions from two different cultures without the sublimation of one to the other. More specifically, I asked whether it is possible for U.S. psychologists to seriously consider Yoga as a whole rather than selectively appropriate facets of the tradition we find desirable while dissociating their context. The structure of this inquiry was designed as an example of how this might occur. Through a rigorous dialogue with source Yogic literature I identified themes that illuminated a more complete picture of the tradition as a whole. Through a similar dialogue with the ten exemplar articles of the dominant discourse on Yoga in U.S. psychology, I identified themes concerning the embedded nature of the mechanisms of appropriation in the institutions and practices of U.S. psychology, and how Yoga as an artifact of how U.S. psychology reifies neoliberalism in the U.S. In the previous chapter, these thematic findings were put into dialogue, initiating a genuine encounter between Yoga and U.S. psychology that allowed Yogic theory, philosophy, psychology, and morality to call into question facets of U.S. psychology as they relate to the human condition, psyche, mental illness, and healing technologies. Through this

final dialogue, I articulated avenues for allowing Yoga to influence U.S. psychology without reverting back to the unconscious inclination to dissociate or appropriate.

Summary of Interpretation

In keeping with Gadamer's concept of dialogue, I decided to interpret source literature to understand Yoga within its context of origin. I selected texts that embody two separate lineages to glean a more complete picture of an ancient tradition with myriad expressions and diverse schools of thought. The decision to interpret ten highly-cited, peer-reviewed articles by U.S. psychologists was based on my understanding of the integral role of scholarly research to convey knowledge in a manner that the discipline broadly considers valid and reliable. Identifying and interpreting the messages embedded in these articles and understanding the world that gave rise to them was essential given the increasing empirical study and clinical use of Yoga in U.S. psychology.

Summary of shared source themes. Despite drawing from a shared foundation of understanding, HYP and YS present the tradition of Yoga in dissimilar ways. Thus, each shared theme was discussed in reference to the understandings presented in each source text. Likewise, these shared themes are summarized in relation to YS and HYP, respectively.

In the spirit of the openness that is the first step in hermeneutic dialogue, every attempt was made to understand how the theoretical, philosophical, and psychological concepts contained within them might be right. In thinking about Yoga from a historical, philosophical, and moral perspective, I identified themes that describe the tradition as a whole. Specifically, I sought to better understand Yogic philosophy on the nature of reality, the potential for human being, and the tradition's psychology, theory of bodymind, illness, and healing technologies. I actively sought to create space for the potential that Yoga may more accurately interpret and

discuss aspects of human experience, suffering, and prescribe more effective forms of treatment than that of U.S. psychology. To seriously consider another tradition necessitates that we understand all traditions, including our own, as unfinished, imperfect, and limited by the cultural and historical framework that determines its vision. This was not to suggest we adopt uncritical acceptance with regard to Yoga; it was an exercise in self-restraint, perseverance, and curiosity in hopes that I might make recognizable the world of Yoga to U.S. psychologists. I sought to strengthen the author's arguments by asking questions to resolve perceived conflicts in what the text was saying to me (Gadamer, 1975).

Source Theme One: Yoga as a Tradition and Experiential Phenomenon

Both source texts were founded on this dual definition of Yoga as both a complex and multifaceted tradition, and a phenomenological state of being. In order to better grasp this two-pronged understanding of Yoga, this theme was broken into two parts. First, the Domains of Yogic Authority, and second, Unity and Duality. Each part will be summarized below in reference to YS and HYP respectively.

Domains of Yogic Authority

The tradition of Yoga includes an extensive and nuanced: theoretical framework, philosophy, psychology, medicine, science, cosmology, and moral vision. Both source texts referred to these seven facets of the Yoga tradition, however, due to overlapping theory and interrelated concepts I grouped the discussion of this shared theme into five categorical sections: (a) Theory, philosophy, and psychology; (b) Practical application; (c) Science; (d) Cosmology; and (e) Moral vision. Given the vastness of the Yogic tradition, these two texts could not possibly convey every facet. Furthermore, the complex interrelated and mutually constitutive aspects of the tradition does not lend well to discrete categories, and these categories were

imposed to assist Western readers in glimpsing the tradition as a whole. Admittedly, the most attention was paid to the theory, philosophy, psychology, and moral vision of Yoga to later support a comparison with U.S. psychology. I identified shared concepts that highlight nuances of the Yogic tradition, and fleshed out a thread of understanding within the discussion of themes, as well as two concepts unique to HYP which are mentioned below as specific subthemes. The following reiteration of findings follows this thread of understanding, where themes, and the concepts within them, are further articulated. Notably, the variations between the presentation of Yoga in YS as compared with HYP are reflected in the language, content, concepts, or themes as a whole.

The bodymind. The Yogic tradition includes a holistic, layered, and multifaceted theory of bodymind that illuminates the relationship between the elements, the senses, and the mental faculties, and further describes a systemic and sequential process of awakening to pure consciousness as the Self. This shared concept emerged as I reflected on the theory, philosophy, and psychology of Yoga as presented in YS. I briefly described the interrelated functions governed by four facets of Yoga's theory of bodymind: *Manas*, *Ahamkara*, *Buddhi*, and *Chittam* as explained by Satchidananda in YS. I gave definitions for terminology, and discussed the significance of a subjective description of mental faculties. Moreover, I discussed the ideal progression of practice and sequential stages of awakening scaffolded by Patanjali and further explained by Satchidananda.

Given the embodied/embedded focus of Tantric Yoga in HYP, the supporting evidence for this concept referenced the interwoven and nuanced layers of bodymind. I quoted Muktibodhananda's description of the mind as comprised of 24 elements, including organs of thought, organs of action, subtle elements, concrete elements, and the *antah karana*. I discussed

the concept of *shiva* and *shakti* as unique to HYP's description of Yoga. I asserted that HYP went further than YS in explaining the mechanisms and processes that support Yogic theory and philosophy. Moreover, I later shared HYP's description of the mutually constitutive layers of bodymind.

Interaction with suffering. Per the Yogic tradition, ignorance is the root of suffering, where our identification with the bodymind causes us to chase after pleasure and avoid pain. This concept emerged in describing YS's two tiered definition of the individual and cosmic self. This concept illustrated how mental illness is understood within the tradition of Yoga. More specifically, I reflected on the cyclic relationship between *vritti*, *samskara*, *vasana* (via repeatedly reinforced *samskara* that give rise to further *vritti*), *karma* (the fruits of all acts performed while identified with the bodymind during this and all previous lifetimes and whose effect has not yet been realized), and reincarnation (the process of rebirth that continues until one perfects *vairagya* and reaps the fruit of all previous acts). Considering this cyclic relationship helped me communicate why individualism is seen as the root of all illness and malaise within the Yogic tradition.

I articulated this concept further after discussing the relationship between attachment, aversion, and suffering, and the natural progression of desire from selfish aims to selfless ones within Yogic philosophy as presented by HYP. This discussion included an explanation of the three *gunas* as states or attributes that qualify all objects, subjects, actions, and interactions.

The whole of existence. Mind, body, and nature (the whole of existence) cannot be understood or effectively treated as separate. I recognized this concept in YS when Satchidananda articulated the inextricable relationship between the elements, senses, and mental faculties in Yoga. I repeated Satchidananda's definition of nature which describes the individual

bodymind as fundamentally embedded. I gathered increasing support for this concept when considering the practical application of the tradition as expressed by YS. Lastly, I discussed Satchidananda's commentary on *asana* and *pranayama* as the third and fourth limb of Yoga, which suggests a holistic intervention strategy that targets the body and breath to elicit changes in the mind.

My discussion of the *pranic* body, presented in HYP as the link between the physical body and the mind, supported my articulation of this shared concept. Here, I reflected on Muktibodhananda's assertion that it is easier and thus preferable to work with the body to influence the mind. I shared the link established in HYP between the nostrils, side bodies, cognition and affect, *ida* and *pingala nadis*, *chitta* and *prana*, the moon and sun, and the dimensions of time and space as articulated in HYP. I quoted Muktibodhananda who established the relationship between the 49 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet and the forty nine essential faculties of mind, where each letter is also correlated with a specific part of the body and the bodily functions it governs. Lastly, in support of this concept I communicated the sequential phases of awakening as described in HYP.

Temporary and lasting pleasure, and the steadfastness of unified consciousness.

This describes the Yogic tradition's view on the fleeting pleasures gained through sensual experiences in the bodymind, which are but a drop of water when compared to the ocean of bliss that is ones' true nature. Per HYP, To remain steadfast in the realization of self as an embodiment of unified consciousness is the aim of the tradition. As the aim of the tradition was articulated in YS, both Patanjali and Satchidananda went to great lengths to discern the difference between the fleeting pleasure experienced through the bodymind and the permanent contentment and bliss that accompanies realization of one's true nature as undifferentiated

consciousness. Thus, the support for these concepts was to convey these philosophical and theoretical threads of understanding.

This concept acts as a parallel for YS and HYP, which arose when I was interpreting HYP and I did not discuss this relative to YS until I was considering Yoga as a phenomenon. The concept identified in YS became recognizable to me while imparting the systemic process of awakening in the Yoga tradition as described in HYP. Yogic awakening is described as a process of ascension, of transcending the body in YS, whereas in HYP it is a process of ascension and descension, of embodiment or liberation while remaining in the body. I reiterated how manifest consciousness in HYP is coaxed to ascend along *sushumna*, pass through and purify each *chakra* along the way, merge with unified consciousness at the crown of the head, and then descend back to the root, returning to a differentiated state as the embodied or lived expression of Yoga.

After articulating the interpretation of the previous concept in HYP, I mentioned other facets of Yogic theory that HYP presented differently than YS. I explained that Yogic theory in HYP does not make a distinction between physical transformation and psychological awakening, they are inextricable and happen simultaneously. I discussed that the practice of Yoga in HYP follows a different sequence whose primary aim is purification of the bodymind. The moral framework of *yama* and *niyama* is intentionally set aside in the Hatha Yoga of HYP. Unlike YS, HYP suggests the use of *shatkarma*, *bandha*, and *mudra* to circumvent the mind. I reiterated the theoretical presupposition that if the bodymind is fully purified, the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* should theoretically arise without strain or internal conflict. I further noted that Yogic theory as presented in HYP proposes that *asana*, *shatkarma*, *pranayama*, *bandha*, and *mudra* are all forms of *prathyahara*, or withdrawal of the senses from

an outward focus on the world to an inward focus on the Self. I echoed Muktibodhananda's assertion that these practices result in the perfection of *dharana*, which spontaneously and effortlessly give rise to *dyana*, and *samadhi*. I described the phenomena of *dyana* and *samadhi*, as well as that of *nada* (subtle vibration created by union of *shiva* and *shakti*) and *laya* which are given significant attention in the final chapter of HYP, again reinforcing Hatha Yoga's attempt to avoid mental effort and intrapsychic conflict. Lastly, I remarked on the different positions taken in YS and HYP on the role of desire and sensuality in Yogic practice.

Surrendering the ego. Without an attitude of surrender, practice will fail to yield fruit, or the fruits harvested will be squandered on the ego. The repeated warnings from Satchidananda gave me the sense that this shared concept was necessary to discuss. A large number of sūtras specifically referenced a litany of *siddhis*, or powers gained through Yogic practices, and the harm associated with misuse of this power for egoistic purposes. I summarized the ideal attitude, qualities, and character that YS suggests the practitioner adopt to be the most successful in practice and avoid the pitfalls of the ego. Here, I discussed the concept of *vairagya* in Yogic theory, and the suggestion in YS that surrender is the primary component of non-attachment. I further evaluated the Yogic premise (as conveyed within YS) that *vairagya* offsets the role of attachment and aversion in identity formation, *karma*, and reincarnation.

I discussed a core concern of Muktibodhananda regarding the absence of this understanding within the dissemination and practice of Yoga in the West. I also discussed this concept in the section covering the moral framework of Yoga. In this section, I explained the value of surrender demonstrated through devotion to the *guru* as eroding the ego through the subjugation of one's will.

As you think, so you become. This concept is drawn from scripture quoted by Satchidananda as he discussed the early stages of Yogic practice. Satchidananda explained how thoughts result in action, repeated actions become habits, and habits shape character. He referred to the mental practice called *pratipaksha bhavanam* as ignoring thoughts that fuel selfish aims, and attending to those that promote selflessness. I conveyed how this shared concept is implicit within the practice of *mantra japa*, and how it led into the discussion of the moral framework of Yoga. Attending to the Yogic concept that thoughts and words as constitutive and influential with regard to our perception of/interaction with the material world, felt important given the similarities between this shared concept and the assumptions of cognitivism within U.S. psychology.

The significance of this concept in HYP mirrored that of YS. I reiterated the assertions in HYP about the interplay of *prana shakti* and *chitta shakti* and their combined ability to enact concrete changes in oneself and one's environment. While Muktibodhananda did not reference the practice of *pratipaksha bhavanam*, her description of desire as something that initially is expressed selfishly and becomes selfless as the result of suffering similarly refines character. Furthermore, I cited multiple references to material existence as an expression of unified consciousness and comparisons between Yoga and quantum physics that highlight the misperception of material reality as comprised of concrete and distinct entities. I reiterated the link between this concept and both traditions assertion that the nature of material reality is fluid and adaptable.

The value of suffering. Suffering itself has value and welcoming suffering is beneficial. This concept became apparent to me at the outset of the second book in YS on the practical application of Yoga. I referenced the first sūtra in this book, which features the concept of *tapas*,

a concept that overtly describes the benefits of welcoming suffering. I explained the relationship between the concept of *tapas* and the *chakras* as energy centers within the bodymind. I communicated the emotional states and attributes that YS implied most frequently act as barriers to practice, named the 13 ways practice can be derailed or delayed, and briefly remarked on how most of these can be understood as means of avoiding suffering.

This concept was presented in conjunction with the subtheme identified in YS to facilitate a discussion of ego as the greatest barrier to practice and suffering as the key ingredient that undermines attachment to the bodymind. I also reflected on this concept when considering the moral framework of Yoga. I reiterated the concept of *tapas*, which redefines pain as valuable in the process of purification. I considered the link established in HYP between penance, austerity, and reward. Moreover, I articulated the Yogic assertion that embracing suffering changes our experience and interpretation of it.

Limits of knowledge. All knowledge obtained via the mind is limited and conditional, and knowing beyond (or without) mind is closer to experience than intellectual understanding. This shared concept became crystallized for me while exploring Yogic science as described in YS. I asserted that due to the globalization of Western values, the word science has come to be associated with the doctrine of objectivity and methods of inquiry developed in Europe during the enlightenment era. I expressed concern that the ontological claims of Western science easily deafen its converts to other equally relevant modes of inquiry. I considered the Yogic assertion that there are ways of knowing beyond the mind, and reiterated the practice of *samyama* described in YS as an experience that supposedly garners this type of understanding. I quoted the definition of science and explored how Yogic inquiry meets the criteria of a science. I further discussed the embedded nature of Yogic science, which gives authority to subjective

experience as a valid and reliable interpretive resource. Lastly, I remarked on the non-hierarchical and accessible nature of Yogic science, where laypeople are not less equipped than professionals to experientially verify the truth of the teachings.

In contrast, the primary focus on embodied practice, on experience over knowledge in HYP exemplified this concept. I explained that in general, the verses of HYP focus on describing practices and their purpose and warn that overindulgence in thinking about theory, philosophy, or morality fuels the mind. I explained how this is captured in the differences between concepts and the themes unique to HYP. I argued that the Tantric theory of bodymind is far more complex and extensive than any theory of mind in U.S. psychology. I specifically highlighted that Tantric Yoga conceives of the body as comprised of three interwoven bodies: (a) material body: *sthula sharira*; (b) subtle/astral body: *sukshma sharira*; and (c) causal/etheric body: *karana sharira*; and that these three bodies are further subdivided into ten bodies, or sheathes that move from gross to etheric. I discussed the *pranic* body as a subdivision of the *sukshma sharira*, and remarked on the *pranic* body as the mediator between the body and mind. I described the complex network of *nadis*, and the *chakras* as another subdivision of the *sukshma sharira*. Lastly, I considered the relationship between different types and stages of practice and these mutually constitutive layers of bodymind they were designed to purify.

HYP theme one. Within the broader theme, I included this specific section relative to the HYP text. The practice of Yoga is not universal but particular, sensitive to the era, environment, stage of life, time of day, and the *sadhaka's* constitution, diet, and lifestyle. Given the emphasis on the unique needs of each practitioner and the particularities of practice, I felt a responsibility to include it as a central feature of Yoga as depicted specifically in HYP. I articulated this subtheme when considering the practical application of Yoga. I reiterated the ideal attitude,

attributes, and lifestyle of the practitioner, suggested by the verses and commentary in HYP. I reflected on Yoga's nuanced approach to intervention, where centuries of observation have confirmed the times of day and eras in history when practices are most effective. I remarked on the significance and classification of time in Yoga. I discussed the frequent references to Ayurveda such as the principles of a Yogic diet and correctly balancing the six *rasas* (flavors) and nourishing all seven *dhatu*s. I further considered the Yogic assertion that practice should be tailored to one's *dosha*. I also discussed the attitude, attributes, and lifestyle choices that are contraindicated for Yogic practice. Ironically, while the willful imposition of *yama* and *niyama* is not advised in HYP, the nuanced particularities of practice articulated in the text mirror the prescriptions and proscriptions of these first two limbs of Yoga. Lastly, I discussed this subtheme further in the section covering the moral vision of Yoga with regard to the role of the *guru* in selecting appropriate practices and determining the ideal sequence of practice to elicit the best result and protect the practitioner from harm and confusion.

HYP theme two. There is a relationship between the breath and the mind. The frequency with which the relationship between the breath and the mind was mentioned in both the verses and commentary of HYP qualified it as a subtheme. I linked this relationship to the overarching assertion of HYP that working with the body is more direct and effective than working with the mind. I reiterated Muktibodhananda's metaphor regarding the mind being like a wild animal at the outset of practice, and that starting with the breath is more realistic than attempting to get the mind to be still. I described the practice of retaining the breath, the different types of retention, and discussed the role of retention in stopping the mind. Lastly, I briefly explained *pranayama* practices, and the combined use of *bandhas* and *mudras*, as well as their intended results.

Honoring the unified nature of existence. Devotion to justice, harmony, and balance honors the unified nature of existence. This concept ran throughout YS, but was recognizable to me as I began to wrestle with the moral framework of Yoga. The first two limbs of Yoga, *yama* and *niyama*, overtly express what is morally prescribed and proscribed within the tradition. However, the *yama* and *niyama* tacitly endorse the Yogic values of justice, harmony and balance. I considered the phenomenon of Yoga as undifferentiated, and the implications of unified consciousness as the underlying nature of reality. I echoed the theoretical assertion of Satchidananda that to realize Yoga would be to experience the other, and all of existence, as indistinguishable from oneself; an experience that is inescapably altruistic.

This concept was presented when I discussed HYP's expression of this shared theme. In considering the moral vision of Yoga, I remarked on Muktibodhananda's focus on social justice in HYP. I quoted statements about Yoga being accessible to anyone regardless of demographic variables. I further cited Muktibodhananda's assertion that the realization of Yoga is the birthright of all human beings. Lastly, I commented on the use of balance as the qualitative measure of health and wellbeing, and that all Yogic practices are essentially geared towards bringing polarized forces into harmony.

Unity and Duality

The phenomenon of Yoga is the experience of being undifferentiated never-changing consciousness (Unity), the source that differentiates to become the myriad ever-changing names and forms in existence (Duality). The second part of this shared theme was my attempt to capture the extensive discussion within both source texts surrounding the phenomena of Yoga. I explained that while any description of a state that is meant to be subjectively or viscerally understood will always fall short, the effort to glimpse such an understanding is not in vain. I

asserted that the phenomenon of Yoga is widely misunderstood if not dissociated entirely. Given that it constitutes the aim of the whole tradition, I felt a responsibility to feature the phenomenon of Yoga and deliver it from obscurity. The discussion below follows a thread of understanding transmitted through three subthemes identified that clarify nuances of Yoga as a state of being. The description of Yoga as a phenomenon varies between YS and HYP, and these differences are reflected in both the language of the subthemes, or the subthemes as a whole.

Consciousness as ever-changing and never-changing. Veiled by the ever-changing names and forms in existence is one never-changing unified consciousness. This subtheme was described slightly differently in YS than in HYP. In YS, the importance of *yama* and *niyama* arose from a fundamental understanding that the ever-changing names and forms in existence is an illusion, or *maya*, that obscures the underlying reality of one never-changing unified consciousness. I drew this theme from a phrase spoken by Satchidananda, but made the linguistic choice to use the word veiled to indicate this distinction. I explained that the concept of *maya* suggests that the bodymind and sensuality (as an expression of material existence) must necessarily be an obstacle to awakening, and therefore the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* safeguard against their negative influence.

In HYP, all the ever-changing names and forms in existence are just varied expressions of one never-changing unified consciousness. Conversely, the language of this shared subtheme was slightly altered to better represent the description of the Yoga Phenomenon presented in HYP. I quoted Muktibodhananda assertion that all matter, whether animate or inanimate, is alive and conscious. I highlighted the drastic difference between this position and the notion articulated in YS that all matter is an illusion or projection of the mind. I discussed *shiva* as unified consciousness, *shakti* as differentiated manifest consciousness, and the union of the two

in the *sahasrara chakra* as the phenomenon of Yoga.

Perception of Duality. Per YS, our perception or experience of duality is caused by our identification with the bodymind. The second subtheme supporting the concept of Yoga as a phenomenon points to how we lose touch with our true nature or the nature of reality. I conveyed that in YS, a dualistic understanding of reality is considered to be the result of ignorance. I pointed the reader back to the discussion of identification with the bodymind as ignorance, ignorance as the cause of suffering, and the relationship between *vasanas*, *samskaras*, and *vrittis* as perpetuating this ignorance.

Per HYP, our perception or experience of duality is due to the toxicity of the bodymind. I altered both the content and the language to convey how HYP explained this aspect of Yoga. While HYP's version of this theme also refers to how the practitioner loses sight of Yoga as a phenomenon, I chose to highlight the divergent explanation offered in HYP regarding why this occurs. I reiterated Yogic theory that suggests that initially even our own bodies appear to us as separate and discrete physical entities until we engage in a thorough process of purification through the practice of Hatha Yoga. I remarked that even expressions of ego are viewed as impurities or impediments to the harmonious functioning of the bodymind in HYP. I mentioned that this second subtheme not only describes how human beings become estranged from the nature of reality, but also suggests a way to reunite with pure consciousness. I explained that all the practices described in HYP are essentially part of an extensive and transformative system of purification that follows a path from gross to subtle and prepares the bodymind to fully awaken.

Experiences of Yoga. Per YS, it is through the practical application of the eight limbs that we experience absorption, samadhi, or Yoga. The intent of this subtheme was to articulate how the Yoga tradition suggests practitioners realize Yoga as a phenomenon. I remarked on the

weighted focused on the eight limbs in YS as outlining the central features of the tradition and describing the ideal sequence of practice from a Vedantic perspective. I further reflected on YS's assertion that the eight limbs guide the practitioner from gross physical experience through subtler and subtler layers of being.

Per HYP, the fleeting pleasures gained through sensual experiences in the bodymind are a drop of water when compared to the ocean of bliss that is one's true nature. The distinctions in HYP's version of the previous subtheme not only describes how human beings become estranged from the nature of reality, but also suggests a way to reunite with pure consciousness. Instead of redundancy, I decided to articulate a subtheme that was consistently associated with the phenomenon of Yoga throughout HYP. As noted in my description of the first shared subtheme in this section, the embodied or embedded nature of Yoga as presented in HYP led to the inclusion of sensuality and sexuality in yogic practice. I referenced the bliss described as resulting from *maithuna* as a glimpse of Yogic ecstasy. More specifically, I explained the purpose of *maithuna* as extending this period of blissful absorption, enhancing the effects of one's practice, stimulating *kundalini*, and having the potential to result in awakening.

Yoga in the West

I began to recognize this theme when considering Satchidananda disquieting warnings regarding the potential danger associated with misuse of Yoga. I described Satchidananda's concerns regarding the widespread reductionist understanding of Yoga that so poorly captures the nuances of a tradition he refers to as a "science of mind" (p. xi). I discussed Satchidananda's assertion that people in the west misunderstand non-attachment or renunciation of worldly pursuits and sense gratification, mistaking it for self-deprivation. I explained the insatiable nature of desire, and the relationship between attachment to the objects of desire and fear of loss

as articulated in the sūtras and commentary of YS. I further reiterated Satchidananda's avowal that the most precious possession a person can have is a state of inner harmony and peace.

Lastly, I shared quotes that exemplified Satchidananda's warning regarding the immense power that can be gained through Yogic practice, and the serious harm that can come from abuse of such power.

Where Satchidananda expressed frequent concerns about Yoga being misunderstood and misapplied, Muktibodhananda extensively discussed the egocentric way Yoga is now practiced and taught. I shared her repeated warnings about the potential harm associated with the incomplete or inaccurate dissemination of Yoga. I conveyed her enthusiasm regarding the power of Yoga to further human evolution, and her frustration that Yoga is being used primarily for personal gain. I reiterated Muktibodhananda's concern about the limited training teachers receive, and the poor dissemination of Yoga that results. I discussed the interdependence and complete coordination and collaboration of the organ systems of the body as articulated by Muktibodhananda, and her assertion that realized teachers are able to identify and treat the root of disharmony whereas the compartmentalized understanding of Western teachers restricts them solely to symptom resolution. I considered her claim that the proclivity to disregard energy conservation as a fundamental component of physical health is bound up with aversion to discipline and sacrifice. I further reflected on her warning about excessive energy expenditure through sense gratification as a harmful and culturally endorsed phenomenon in the West. I remarked on Muktibodhananda's critique of Yoga as reduced to a therapeutic intervention while the true purpose of Yoga is being ignored. Lastly, I conveyed Muktibodhananda's warning that practice motivated by a desire for the side effects of Yoga harmfully reinforces attachment to the bodymind.

Summary of differentiated themes. After presenting shared themes and subthemes, I discussed themes specific to each source text. I described the following themes identified in the Yoga Sûtras of Patanjali: (a) Fidelity with the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* is where the Yogic path begins, and practice divorced from this moral framework causes harm, and (b) The physical universe is an illusion (*maya*), and both the body and sensuality are obstacles to awakening. Conversely, I described the following themes identified in Hatha Yoga Pradipika: (a) Purification and practice is where the path begins, as these spontaneously awaken moral behavior; whereas the imposition of morality results in conflicting internal drives and psychological harm, and (b) The whole of existence is an expression of unified consciousness and thus the body is sacred and sensuality can support awakening.

YS theme one. Fidelity with the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* is where the yogic path begins, and practice divorced from this moral framework causes harm. I put this theme into context by pulling from previous knowledge about Vedanta, or the school of philosophy drawing from the Vedas. I quoted and cited the textual support for this theme. Moreover, I discussed the *yamas* and *niyamas* as communicating what is requisite, what is prohibited, and alerting the reader to the moral framework of the tradition.

YS theme two. The physical universe is an illusion (*maya*), and both the body and sensuality are obstacles to awakening. Again, I put this theme into context by pulling from previous knowledge about Vedanta, and quoted and cited the textual support for this theme. I considered Yogic philosophy about the material universe as a mental projection. Lastly, I discussed the instrumental relationship to the bodymind as linked to this interpretation.

HYP theme one. Purification and practice is where the path begins, as these spontaneously awaken moral behavior; whereas the imposition of morality results in conflicting

internal drives and psychological harm. I put this theme into context by pulling from previous knowledge about Tantra, or the school of philosophy that diverged from Vedic thought. I quoted and cited the textual support for this theme. I discussed the assertion that moral imposing results in conflicting internal drives and psychological harm. I considered the role of purification in HYP's presentation of Yoga and articulated the concept of ego as a toxin or impurity. Lastly I reflected on the assertion that purification would spontaneously lead a practitioner to adhere to the prescriptions and proscriptions of *yama* and *niyama* and weighed the difference between engaging in willful self-discipline and authentic desire for a way of being in the world.

HYP theme two. The whole of existence is an expression of unified consciousness and thus the body is sacred and sensuality can support awakening. Again, I put this theme into context by pulling from previous knowledge about Tantra, and quoted and cited the textual support for this theme. I referenced Muktibodhananda's discussion of how Tantra was maligned by puritanism because it does not shame or disavow the body. I described the sexual and sensual practices presented in HYP and the radical acceptance of the bodymind that they supposedly produce. Lastly, I considered Yogic theory about the ability for these practices to channel the sexual impulses, awaken *kundalini*, and allow the practitioner to glimpse and perhaps even realize Yoga as a phenomenon.

Summary of questions. After presenting my interpretation of specific themes, I reflected upon my response to different aspect of the texts and asked questions that wrestled with each texts presentation of Yoga and human being. For both YS and HYP I discussed my mixed response to the role of the *guru* and mentioned my difficulty with descriptions of the Yogic tradition as absolute, universal, and ahistorical. I admitted doubt about the validity of subjective inquiry. Furthermore, I noticed the influence of my Western academic indoctrination as I

observed myself wanting the authors to provide supporting evidence for their claims. I articulated oscillating interpretations of the material universe as *maya*, and how these interpretations are informed by embodied familial and cultural values.

For YS I discussed *yama* and *niyama* in the sociopolitical context of the U.S., and wondered whether the moral and understandings and ontological assumptions of students, teachers, and psychologists in the U.S. are an impediment to conceiving of bliss beyond the senses or a self beyond the bodymind. I asked whether the values of neoliberalism in the U.S. sap motivation for renunciation, and pondered whether the realization of Yoga as a phenomenon is desirable to individuals living in the U.S. I considered the impact of an instrumental understanding of Yoga on the ego and the experience of one's bodymind. Lastly, I asked what it would mean to let the tradition of Yoga influence the tradition of psychology in the U.S.

For HYP, I wrestled with the gendered language and double standards in the text and the world that gave rise to it. I inquired if Hatha Yoga was an example of secularism within the tradition of Tantra, and considered whether the separation of Hatha Yoga from the moral framework of Yoga could partially account for its popularity in the U.S. I wondered how an amoral presentation of Yoga may have facilitated the integration of Yoga into U.S. psychology. I asked how an amoral dissemination of Yoga might produce different results within varying cultural contexts. In addition, I contemplated the relationship between repression and indulgence expressed in different cultural contexts and historical eras. Lastly, I pondered whether the extreme and harmful expression of repression and indulgence was at all unique to U.S. history.

Summary of exemplar themes. I identified the following shared themes and subthemes across all ten articles, provided quotes as examples, and discussed each at length. The point of the dialogue with the exemplars was to garner a sense of the dominant discourse about Yoga

among U.S. psychologists. Having thought about the Yogic tradition as a whole, I identified themes that described how Yoga is understood and applied by U.S. psychologists. A secondary aim of the analysis was to consider the world in which this particular understanding and application of Yoga makes sense. Lastly, I looked to better understand U.S. psychologists' moral and ontological assumptions regarding their tradition's theory of mind, mental illness, and healing technologies. Consistent with the previous analysis of source literature, subthemes were identified that clarify and support the overarching shared themes.

Shared exemplar theme one: The culling of Yoga. I identified a six step process of cultural appropriation that all ten articles were predicated on. I referred to this process as the culling of Yoga, defined the term cull, and articulated the following six steps: (a) Dissociate elements of the tradition considered undesirable (those parts that challenge the moral/ontological assumptions of the U.S. psychology), (b) Identify the concepts and practices considered desirable (those theories and practices that appear to mirror or reify the moral/ontological assumptions of the U.S. psychology), (c) Attempt to discern the instrumental benefit of decontextualized concepts and practices using Western scientific research methods (asserting cultural authority through an objective and universal presentation of psychological research methods and findings), (d) Refer to those concepts and practices believed to have instrumental benefit as if they comprise the tradition as a whole, (e) Combine constellations of these concepts and practices with widely accepted therapeutic methods, (f) Re-name and claim these integrative approaches as intellectual property, creating expensive tiered certification programs for other professionals. The subthemes I identified describe these steps and comprise the discussion of this shared theme.

Yoga is defined by psychologists in the U.S. as a method and described using instrumental terms. I observed and reported that all ten articles repeatedly described Yoga as a

technique, practice, intervention, or therapy that includes one or more of the following: a sequence of postures, breathing exercises, and meditation practices. Furthermore, I asserted that for Yoga to function in the context of U.S. psychology it needed to be reduced to a universally applicable method. I further explained that in the secular and instrumental context of U.S. psychology, that Yoga would be discussed in terms that mirror this context, and provided examples of this trend. Lastly, I put this trend into cultural and historical context, discussing the rise of instrumentalism in U.S. culture in general and U.S. psychology in particular, as well as the role of instrumentalism in neoliberal politics.

Subtheme one: Yoga within the context of mindfulness based psychology.

Psychologists in the U.S. often talk about Yoga within the context of mindfulness. I remarked that eight out of ten articles repeatedly define and discussed Yoga in the context of mindfulness. After providing examples, I discussed the history of mindfulness, and Mindfulness Based Psychology (MBP) in particular, as an example of cultural appropriation. I discussed how the history of mindfulness mirrors the six step process I articulated previously. Lastly, I remarked on the implications of Yoga being classified under the umbrella of MBP.

Subtheme two: Language about Yoga. The original terminology used to discuss Yoga is frequently misused, ill-defined, or left out completely. I reiterated that hermeneutic interpretation pays special attention to the particularities of language, giving equal weight to what is not being communicated as an example of what is so important that it is assumed or considered tacit. I explained that in all ten articles, Sanskrit terms are almost entirely absent and translations of terms were inaccurately defined. I put this trend in psychology into cultural context, discussing how poorly defined or misused terminology is a reason for the incomplete or inaccurate understanding of Yoga in the U.S. in general.

Subtheme three: Divide between instrumental and comprehensive Yoga. The postures, breathing exercises, and concentration practices of Yoga are divorced from the symbolism, philosophy, values, prescribed code of conduct, extensive and nuanced body of knowledge, and overall aim of the tradition. I reiterated that hermeneutic interpretation pays special attention to both the particularities of language, giving equal weight to what is not being communicated as an example of what is so important that it is assumed or considered tacit. I explained that while there are no overt examples of this theme, I provided passages that indirectly rejected or notably omitted the symbolism, philosophy, values, prescribed code of conduct, extensive and nuanced body of knowledge, and overall aim of the tradition.

Subtheme four: Western research priorities. Western scientific research methods are given the authority to determine the relevance, efficacy, and value of selected Yogic practices. Here, I considered the work of Said (1983) who asked questions regarding the political nature of academic research. I reiterated his assertion that by ignoring these questions, we ignore the politics of interpretation and take a stance of positional superiority. I repeated the cycle whereby healers generate healing techniques that unwittingly reify the circumstances in which they are embedded and the disorders that are the product of those circumstances. I remarked on the methodology selected for each study, and the reductive and decontextualizing effect of Western, predominantly quantitative, research methods. I noted the emphasis on empirical evidence and the shared purpose of evaluating the instrumental benefit of Yoga. Lastly, I asserted that emphasis on selected Yoga interventions as manualized, secular, and universal is in conflict with the tradition of Yoga, where emphasis is placed on instruction that is tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual.

Subtheme five: Use of yoga for capital gain. Techniques that Western research methods found to be clinically beneficial are often manualized, standardized, combined with widely accepted intervention strategies and then trademarked, copyrighted, and commodified by psychologists in the U.S. I highlighted and discussed nine such trademarked and copyrighted intervention strategies evaluated in the articles, and one developed by a well-known neuropsychologist and scholar. I explained that these methods, while presented altruistically, are predominantly self-serving. I argued that this process constituted the final step in the appropriation of intellectual property and healing technologies from the Yogic tradition.

Exemplar Theme Two: Yoga within the Neoliberal Agenda

Subtheme one: Yoga as an artifact of U.S. psychology. For the reader's ease, I broke up the second theme into two parts, each supported by a subtheme: (a) Yoga as an artifact of U.S. psychology, and (b) The reifying effect of the Yoga artifact on neoliberalism.

Yoga is consigned to being an adjunctive therapy, rather than a comprehensive tradition w/its own system of psychology, theory of mind/mental illness, and techniques to restore health. The aim of this subtheme began by reiterating the six steps that explained the appropriation of Yoga by U.S. psychologists. I reiterated the decontextualized and instrumental understanding and application of Yoga as evidence of it having become an artifact of U.S. psychology. I considered the moral and ontological assumptions that informed how Yoga is understood and applied within U.S. psychology. Lastly, I cited and quoted evidence from the exemplars that illustrate the limited use of Yoga as an adjunctive intervention or as a component of an integrated approach to treatment.

Subtheme two: Neoliberalism reified. The instrumental benefits of Yoga identified as valuable by U.S. psychologists both reflect and reinforce the subjective experience of neoliberal

politics. In my discussion of this subtheme as supporting the second shared theme, I identified the ideologies of neoliberalism. I discussed the concept of anxiety, depression, trauma, and brain training in U.S. psychology and the instrumental benefit of using Yoga in clinical and educational settings as the embodiment of these ideologies, giving them lived authority. I articulated the particular ways in which Yoga as an artifact of U.S. psychology sustains and supports the neoliberal agenda and thus upholds the status quo.

Remaining questions from exemplar articles. After presenting my interpretation of shared themes, I reflected upon my response to different aspect I encountered in the exemplars and asked questions that wrestled with each texts presentation of Yoga and human being. I explained the difference between the analysis of the source texts, where my aim was to understand Yoga as a tradition, and the analysis of the exemplars, where my aim was to recognize and articulate innate aspects of U.S. psychology that explain the particular way Yoga is understood and applied in this context. I wondered what could incite U.S. psychologists to consider methods of inquiry that give authority to subjective experience as equivalent to Western research methods. I inquired about influence of neoliberal ideologies to demarcate the horizon of U.S. psychology. More specifically, I asked about the nuanced ways these ideologies are embodied in our understanding of mind, mental illness, preferred treatment methods, and concept of ideal health. I further considered how the scope of human psyche in U.S. psychology compares with that of Yoga. Lastly, I wondered how the moral framework of U.S. psychology compares with the moral framework of Yoga, and what are the social and political implications of such a comparison.

Summary of thematic dialogue. After completing the hermeneutic literature analysis of the source texts and exemplars, I put the identified themes into dialogue. I began by discussing

the structure of this inquiry as designed to wrestle with the following question: Is it possible for U.S. psychologists to seriously consider Yoga as a whole rather than selectively appropriate facets of the tradition we find desirable while dissociating their context? I explained that immersion in source Yogic literature allowed me to identify themes that illuminate a more complete picture of the tradition as a whole. I remarked that through an immersion in the exemplars, I articulated themes regarding the mechanisms of appropriation and U.S. psychology as embedded in the ideologies of neoliberalism. I explained my intent to let Yoga to influence U.S. psychology without reverting back to the unconscious inclination to dissociate or appropriate by putting these thematic findings into dialogue.

I discussed Gadamer's concept of dialogue and its application in a thematic discourse. I summarized my understanding of Yoga after interpreting the source texts as compared with my understanding of Yoga after interpreting the exemplars. I then asked the following two questions to frame the ensuing thematic discourse: (a) What is lost in a reductive instrumental understanding of Yoga? And, (b) How might a serious consideration of Yogic psychology shed new light on tradition of U.S. psychology?

I reflected on my interpretation of exemplars and the insight garnered about the ideologies constituting neoliberalism determine how Yoga is understood and applied and inescapably circumscribe the horizon of U.S. psychology as a whole. I articulated the thread of individualism that runs throughout the history of psychology in the West. I remarked on neuropsychology as the culmination of mechanized individualism. I then discussed the concept of a self-contained individual as absent in the tradition of Yoga. I described the two-tiered understanding of self and the fundamentally embedded nature of the bodymind in Yogic

philosophy. Moreover, I considered the implications of Yogic theory regarding individualism as the root cause of all suffering.

I discussed the distinction between consciousness and the mind in Yoga, and referenced facets of the tradition's holistic layered and multifaceted theory of bodymind that illuminates an inextricable relationship between the elements, senses, and mental faculties. I highlighted how Yoga's theory of bodymind captured interrelated and mutually constitutive mental faculties, motives, and psychophysiological processes that are vastly overlooked in U.S. psychology. I compared this with primacy of the brain in U.S. psychology as the most significant organ in the human body is an expression of instrumentalism and the reductive influence of Western scientific methods. I discussed the bodymind split and the philosophic origins of U.S. psychology. I discussed the simultaneous birth of psychology and science during the Enlightenment era. I linked the appeal of scientific rationality to the certainty, power, and authority of its universal claims. I noted the continued influence of science on U.S. psychology as to which research practices and healing technologies are preferred in the context of neoliberalism. I asserted that describing illness in biochemical and neuropsychological terms, sourcing mental illness in the brain of the self-contained individual, and dissociating the constitutive relationship between disorders and socio-political life was necessary to justify the ontological claims regarding the instrumental, decontextualized, and manualized healing technologies of U.S. psychology.

Conversely, I considered the lack of distinction between body and mind in the tradition of Yoga. I noted the unity of body, mind, and material reality in Yogic theory. I shared Yogic theory with regards to the myriad and mutually constitutive sheathes of the bodymind. I noted that Yoga appears to understand all illness as the result of imbalance or toxicity created by our

desires, habits, environmental factors, and *karma*. Furthermore, I pointed out that Yoga's embedded understanding of human being led to the development of healing technologies that are not universal but particular, sensitive to the era, environment, stage of life, time of day, and the practitioners constitution.

I considered the focus on intellect in U.S. psychology. I discussed Stolorow's (2011) assertion that research on and assessment of cognitive and executive function secured a position of authority for psychologists in the U.S. I further explained how the weighted importance of intelligence, self-regulation, self-control, and self-reliance in positive psychology, as an arm of neoliberalism, ensures individuals are blamed for their socio-political circumstances.

Alternatively, I discussed the view of intelligence as a barrier within Yogic psychology. I commented on Yogic theory that knowledge, or perceived knowledge, diminishes curiosity and leads to a paralysis of learning. I remarked that both source texts linked egoistic identification with one's thoughts with rigidity and resistance to new ideas. Yogic philosophy outlined in these texts articulated the distinction between wisdom and knowledge, particularly with regard to the moral worth associated with humility. Furthermore, I described Yogic theory with regard to means of knowing achieved without the mind's involvement.

I asserted that the ideological and philosophical conflicts between Yoga and U.S. psychology are apparent in the basic purpose of each tradition. I argued that the altruistic claims of U.S. psychologists mask the unconscious burden of sustaining an available workforce. I explained how the professional status and financial security of psychologists depends on their demonstrative ability to support the agenda of the political and corporate elite. Moreover, I stated that by failing to provide rich and meaningful interpretations of human being, mainstream

psychology does little to address the moral ambiguity, confusion, and pain that accompanies intrapsychic suffering and interpersonal conflict and loss in the neoliberal U.S.

I articulated the purpose of Yoga as stated in both source texts as the realization of human potential. Comparable to the reduction of suffering and restoration of functioning, I described how the tradition of Yoga ultimately sought the absolute eradication of suffering. I explained the counterintuitive means by which Yoga addresses moral pain, and pointed out how the Yogic concept of human potential challenges taken-for-granted understandings in the U.S. with regard to the laws of nature and the limits of human being. I noted that the embodied and holistic nature of Yogic practice highlights the ideologies of neoliberalism in the U.S. I further described how practice removed from the moral framework of Yoga encourages tolerance of harmful sociopolitical circumstances rather than empowering people towards political resistance. I discussed the dissociative and instrumental relationship to the body in the neoliberal U.S.

After discussing U.S. psychology and Yogic psychology, I considered the moral framework of Yoga and the questions it raised about the institutions and practices of U.S. psychology. I addressed the moral differences between the source Yogic texts. I remarked on the secular appeal of a reductive and instrumental understanding of Yoga in the context of neoliberalism. I mentioned that both Satchidananda and Muktibodhananda warned against the reductive and decontextualized dissemination of Yoga, and reiterated specific concerns. I explained how the lasting unshakable bliss and contentment associated with realizing the self as pure consciousness appears as wholly unbelievable in the U.S. I referenced the use of quantum physics to make tangible Yogic philosophy and theory. I articulated the following questions: (a) Do the cherished ideologies of individualism and instrumentalism in U.S. culture obstruct an understanding of bliss beyond the senses or of the self beyond the bodymind?, (b) Given our

commitment to freedom, autonomy, and self-determination and our desire to set ourselves apart, to be recognized as unique or exceptional, what motivation would people in the U.S. have to persist in a practice that undermines these norms?, (c) Are U.S. citizens able to recognize the value of contentment, and would they be willing to surrender the pursuit of personal gain and temporary but immediate gratification to attain it?, (d) Would people in the U.S. have an interest in practicing Yoga if the virtues of discipline, asceticism, austerity, and renunciation were central to its dissemination?, and (e) More specifically, is the realization of Yoga as a phenomenon desirable to people in the U.S.?

I discussed the role of the *guru* in both source texts and the relationship between the intellectual imperialism that began during the enlightenment era and U.S. psychologists assumed right to utilize Yoga without supervision or guidance from a realized master. I asserted that the value of justice and harmony, and the belief that Yoga belongs to all of creation motivated the generosity of *gurus* such as Vivikananda to share the tradition of Yoga with the West. I remarked that the globalization of Western ideologies and methods of inquiry normalized the decision to subject Yoga to scientific research. I further mentioned that the concerns raised by the authors of both texts suggest that the *gurus* who initially brought Yoga to the U.S. did not anticipate the reductive and instrumental impact U.S. culture would have on the tradition. Lastly, I evaluated Yogic elevation of sacrifice, surrender, asceticism, humility, discipline, pacifism, honesty, generosity, abstaining from theft, abstaining from greed, and purity as values and virtues that have all but disappeared in mainstream U.S. culture, and now appear foreign in the context of neoliberalism. This lengthy discussion raised a few questions that I articulated as follows: What would it be like to experience freedom from the egoistic pressure to secure one's

basic needs? Is it possible to sustain the fearless confidence of vairagya without the cultural support for renunciation or a communal willingness to pool resources?

In the final section, I identified concrete ways U.S. psychologists might allow themselves to be influenced by Yoga without reverting back to the unconscious inclination to dissociate or appropriate. I articulated the philosophic origins of U.S. psychology. I discussed the similarity between the values of Yoga and those of philosophic hermeneutics. I discussed exceptions to this comparison, and described how a re-embrace of hermeneutic theory would call into question essentially every domain of life in the U.S. In closing, I suggested that rather than attempting to possess those aspects of Yoga that do not challenge the status quo, we instead participate (or encourage our patients to participate) in the tradition of Yoga. I encouraged U.S. psychologists acknowledge their complicity, whether unknowing or otherwise, in the neoliberal agenda, discontinue practices that sustain intellectual imperialism, and commit to disciplinary integrity. Moreover, I asserted that adopting moral discourse and subjective hermeneutic inquiry as a politically subversive approach to the clinical and academic practice of U.S. psychology would constitute an example of disciplinary integrity.

Strengths, Limitations, and Directions for Future Inquiry

Limitations. In examining the limitations of this inquiry, it is important to note that this assessment comes from the perspective of my training in Western research methodology. Western research values dictate that large-scale, replicable studies such as randomized controlled trials, are considered optimal for legitimizing data. Even for qualitative data, Western methods require extensive and objective thematic evaluation, interrater reliability coefficients, and often times, the quantification of qualitative data. In empirical literature there is an implied hierarchy that colors the way we are allowed to describe our data; case studies, qualitative studies, small-

sample studies, and thematic inquiries such as this are regarded as less valuable than RCTs and meta-analyses. With these values and biases in mind, I present the following evaluation of the limitations of this inquiry.

The primary limitation of my study was the scope with which it was undertaken. While the scope of this project, including two source texts and ten exemplar articles, is appropriate as it is the first inquiry of its kind, it should be noted that Western research methods often dictate broader samplings when engaging in a systematic literature review. Because of the novelty of this inquiry, it represents an under-investigated area in psychological literature, particularly on the topic of Yoga. With this novelty, this study has limited extant literature on which to build, replicate, or engage in comparison. This means that the present inquiry is, essentially, an in-depth case study in which the focal characters are Yogic source texts and a sampling of articles on the implementation of Yoga in the U.S. As with all case studies and small-sample research, this limits generalizability. Generalizability is also limited because of the very nature of the hermeneutic process; I, as the interpreter, played an integral role in the dialogue between the source texts and exemplar articles, drawing themes and conclusions influenced substantially by my own experiences. This means that other investigators, should they take on these same source texts and articles, would undoubtedly have vastly different responses to and experiences with the inquiry.

An additional limitation to note is that the inquiry was comprised of the source texts, exemplar articles, and my own interpretation, and did not include direct perspectives of other psychologists in the U.S. This is discussed further in the commentary on directions for future research.

Another limitation of the study was the use of translated source texts and my inability to

read the original texts in Sanskrit. This meant that the presentation of Yoga in the verses and sūtras have already been through a process of interpretation. In Western research terms, this is akin to reading a secondary source, rather than a primary one; the information is filtered through the lens of another writer, which may result in changes of perspective, tone, or meaning from the context in which the original author meant for it to be received. This was unavoidable; Yogic texts originate from the Sanskrit language, and as such, any available versions of these are technically subject to the risk of linguistic misinterpretation. Relatedly, I selected texts from India because Indian *gurus* brought Yoga to the U.S. This means that the Yogic tradition that evolved in other countries, such as Indonesia and Tibet, was underrepresented in this inquiry. Additionally, it was beyond the scope of this inquiry to include an interpretation of older source literature where the use of mythology, metaphor, and story to illustrate philosophy and theory might render nuances of Yoga not evident in the source texts I selected. This would have given further contextual understanding to the dialogue between the Yogic texts and exemplar articles.

While I believe my extensive experience and relationship with Yoga both in the U.S. and in India enhanced my ability to describe the tradition and recognize the reductive and instrumental understanding and application of Yoga in U.S. psychology, I am simultaneously aware that my perspective is uncommon among my colleagues.

Strengths. While subjectivity was noted as a limit to generalizability, it is also important to mention the value of my personal engagement with the inquiry as a primary strength of this investigation. Using a hermeneutic framework, the important findings of this inquiry are directly related to my own interpretations, thematic findings, and responses to the texts in question. Certainly, my knowledge and training in both Yoga and psychology were crucial in understanding the meaning, tone, and implications of the source texts and exemplars. The

questions that arose as a result of this inquiry further demonstrate the importance of its qualitative nature; identifying shared themes between ancient and modern texts is not a quantifiable process, and by maintaining the qualitative hermeneutic perspective, we maintain the value and richness of the findings.

An additional strength of this study is its novelty. Because this is an underrepresented method of investigation, it can serve as an example for future studies aiming to engage in a dialogue of texts. In this sense, the method used is widely generalizable as it can be adapted to essentially any topic and is not limited to Yoga or psychology literature. This novelty serves another purpose as well; initiating awareness among readers. Despite the emphasis placed on replicability, Western research culture also values unique findings, particularly when those findings provide footing for further replicable inquiry.

This study functions as a call to action for psychologists to examine the appropriation of Yoga, and to consider ways that we may improve our implementation of Yoga as an intervention. It should be reiterated that this inquiry does not aim to discourage the use of Yoga in Western psychology; rather, it serves as a way to generate discussion about the ethnocentric manner in which Yoga is currently utilized in order to come to a greater understanding about the Yogic tradition so that it can be utilized with more competence and respect, and so that it can better serve patients. Ultimately, this discussion has both clinical and empirical implications. Clinically, we may find that by honoring Yoga by considering its origin, context, and indigenous philosophy and psychology, we are able to better serve patients by addressing suffering, rather than avoiding it. In this way, psychologists are honoring also the guidelines set forth by APA by striving toward ethical practice, cultural competence, and beneficence. With regard to empirical implications, this study provides areas for future inquiry. While quantitative information was not

the focus of this investigation, it can serve as the basis for research that is specifically aligned with Western research priorities. This is discussed further below in the commentary on outlets for future research.

An additional strength of this study is the systematic nature with which I sought, reviewed, and interpreted source texts. This is aligned with Western research values, and demonstrates a delicate balance between the hermeneutic framework, and the empirical research process. I selected exemplar texts that are considered noteworthy in the context of U.S. psychology, based on their development, peer-review process, dissemination, and wide influence as measured by impact factor. Similarly, I selected source texts that are considered authoritative in the context of the Yogic tradition, demonstrating merit within the culture from which they came. In addition, I reviewed the source texts and articles in the same manner one would approach a systematic literature review, which is a widely accepted Western research practice.

Directions for future inquiry. This study represents the basis for a wealth of new research opportunities. In an effort to further the discussion on the use of Yoga in U.S. psychology, this section presents several specific suggestions for additional investigation. Future research should aim to go beyond the scope of this investigation in order to explore further the role, history, implementation, and context of Yoga in Western psychology. A comprehensive evaluation of extant literature on Yoga by psychologists throughout history would render valuable insights about the influence of the sociopolitical climate in the U.S. on the understanding and application of Yoga. Relatedly, exploration of different Yogic source texts and exemplar articles would provide varied perspectives of the themes present in the literature. My perspective about this topic is colored by my experience with Yoga beyond its abbreviated use in clinical psychology, and I encourage psychologists with varied backgrounds to undertake

similar investigations. Multiple interpretations of source Yogic literature by psychologists without this background would be generative as a source for comparison. Moreover, consulting with a Yogic scholar from India about the themes identified and interpretations made would have significantly strengthened this study and can serve as the focus for future investigations.

While this inquiry was framed via hermeneutic interpretation, it can serve as a topic of investigation in other types of research. Using a qualitative research methodology, it would be of particular interest to interview or employ focus groups with U.S. psychologists to discuss the pursuit of disciplinary integrity at the cost of personal power and privilege. In a research context, these conversations could be used as *in vivo* exemplars of current discourse on Yoga in U.S. psychology in a way that is more concentrated than what was included in the scope of the present evaluation. It is likely that these discussions would also generate themes for interpretation.

In line with Western research values, I would like to also acknowledge opportunities for the quantifying the topic of this investigation. It would be particularly valuable to survey psychologists to evaluate their awareness about, attitudes toward, knowledge of, and implementation of Yoga in clinical practice. This would serve a dual purpose; firstly, it would elucidate further the current discourse about Yoga among psychologists in the U.S., and secondly, it may serve as another basis for psychologists to examine their role in the appropriation of Yoga. This type of survey may also seek information about psychologists' willingness to engage in the Yogic tradition, their openness to adapting Yoga in a culturally-sensitive and appropriate way, and to allow Yoga to become an inspiration, rather than a tool to be harvested for abbreviated use.

It is not the intention of this research to provide instruction or to intervene specifically to

solve the problem of appropriation of Yoga in U.S. psychology. Rather, in the vein of promoting awareness, future efforts in this area could focus on providing trainings for psychologists who utilize Yoga-based treatments clinically. Many psychologists are required to pursue continuing education following licensure, and it is likely that the topic of this investigation could be adapted to fulfill a didactic training to facilitate discussion, learning, and appreciation of the ways Yoga can influence clinical practice without being subsumed by engrained neoliberalism. Moreover, these types of trainings may generate opportunities for psychologists to gain awareness about their unknowing complicity in the neoliberal agenda, discontinue practices that sustain intellectual imperialism, and commit to disciplinary integrity.

Foregrounding Revisited

While the previous section addressed the limitations of this project and fruitful avenues of further inquiry, in this closing section I reflect back on the foregrounding of my study. The purpose of this reflection is to examine how my personal and professional interpretation of Yoga and U.S. psychology, as well as awareness of my own horizon, has changed over the course of this inquiry.

During this study I was able to recognize that my familial experience of the religious right, and the moral ambiguity, confusion, and pain associated with growing up in the neoliberal United States fueled a desire to understand the spiritual traditions of the Other. I was, as Cushman (1995) would put it, attempting to fill up the empty self. I now see that my interest in the shared moral understandings across spiritual traditions was an attempt to find universal truths, an effort that mirrors the ontological assumptions of Western science. I became increasingly aware that my exposure to the spiritual traditions of the other were coming to me predominantly through forms of cultural appropriation that only partially, and often inaccurately

describe the traditions themselves. I can now see that my unquestioning acceptance of Yoga was itself a form of cultural appropriation, and that if not for becoming disillusioned after extricating myself from a cult where I had previously been a devotee, I might not have developed a more culturally nuanced understanding of the tradition. I now recognize that by using a reductive and decontextualized form of Yoga with underprivileged and oppressed populations I was unintentionally teaching tolerance of the circumstances that gave rise to their suffering. Specifically, I became aware of how I have been complicit in sustaining the status quo, and not only enabling but fostering passivity with regard to social change.

Regardless of becoming demoralized from my ten year experience in a cult, I realized through this study that the values and virtues in the Yogic tradition still speak to me. They continue to inform my personal and professional interests and commitments. However, over the course of this inquiry I had the visceral experience of how these virtues and values conflict with the ideologies of neoliberalism, illuminating intrapsychic confusion about the world I live in, my choices and lifestyle, and where I feel capable of enacting change. As a new parent, I now find myself split between sustaining the material and educational opportunities my child has access to and embodying moral integrity. I have become aware of the specific ways in which the institutions and practices of U.S. psychology reify neoliberalism, and the philosophical impossibility of integrating the traditions of Yoga and U.S. psychology. However, my experience conducting this study has confirmed my belief that both traditions could benefit from an ethical encounter, where each are influenced without appropriation. For example, I have considered that we need an ego to transcend the ego, and that Yoga might benefit from the concept of scaffolding a healthy self before deconstructing it. Conversely, I have come to the understanding that U.S. psychologists would likely benefit from considering the moral,

theoretical, philosophical, and practical components of Yogic psychology if they are interested in cultivating disciplinary reflexivity, integrity, and supporting social change that reduces the suffering of individuals in the U.S. While I know this is divergent from popular opinion, this study has made clear that an ethical and mutually beneficial encounter between these traditions does not support the use of decontextualized Yogic practices and concepts within U.S. psychology. While some might argue that the patients of U.S. psychologists and their patients benefit from the instrumentalized use of Yoga, perhaps the benefit is too shortsighted and fraught with unintended sociopolitical consequences. This new awareness has caused me to question whether I feel comfortable identifying with or advertising myself as a Yoga instructor, particularly with regard to whether I utilize my training in my clinical practice. In general, this inquiry has caused me to wrestle with how I want to participate in both traditions of Yoga and U.S. psychology.

The aim of dialogue is a fusion of horizons, where suddenly our view of self, other, and the content under discussion has shifted. Gadamer (1975) explained that to reach understanding in dialogue means not only that a common language has been achieved, but also that we have been, “transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were” (p. 5671). This is not simply a cognitive shift, but a physical and cultural transformation as well. In this study, I succeeded in re-visioning my lived understanding of Yoga and U.S. psychology as an embodied historical event. The fusion of horizons achieved in this dialogue was the transformation of my understanding of Yoga, U.S. psychology, and myself as a participant in both traditions. Beyond this broadening of my personal horizon, it is my hope that this inquiry serves to raise questions among other U.S. psychologists.

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Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Definitions adapted from the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

Acharya(s): Spiritual leader, instructor, teacher, or guide

Advaita: Directly translated as ‘without two;’ this term refers to a monastic philosophy that there is only one state of consciousness and that all duality should be understood as a projection or illusion

Agni: a) literal fire; b) fire as a cosmic principle; c) a deva (ruling force) that governs fire

Ahamkara: a) The faculty of ego that gives an awareness of ‘I’; b) The center of one’s individual physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual functioning experienced as separate or apart from the rest of existence

Ahimsa: a) One of the Yamas (the first of Patanjali’s eight limbs of Yoga); b) Translates as non-injury, non-violence or non-harming; c) A decree to do no harm.

Ajna: a) The sixth chakra (psychic or energy center in the human body); b) Seat of intuition and higher knowledge situated at the medulla oblongata; c) Often referred to as the ‘third eye’, the source of the ability to self-monitor

Akasha: a) Space; b) Ether; c) Sky

Amaroli mudra: Tantric practice in which the midstream of urine is drunk or applied to the body

Amma: A shortened name for the spiritual leader and philanthropist Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Ma

Amrita: a) Divine nectar that bestows immortality; b) To be without death

Anahata: a) The fourth Chakra (psychic or energy center in the human body); b) Seat of the spiritual heart or hridayam situated in the cardiac plexus

Anamaya kosha: a) The first sheath of the bodymind; b) The food body, or the gross physical form

Anandamaya kosha: a) The fifth sheath of the bodymind; b) The bliss body, or a state where we experience the self as undifferentiated bliss

Anima: Animal impulse or animal appeal

Antah karana: a) Literally translates to ‘inner tool’; b) Inner organ of consciousness comprised of manas, chitta, buddhi, and ahamkara

Antar trataka: The practice of internal gazing at a point of concentration

Antaranga kumbhaka: a) The practice of internal breath retention; b) An essential step in the perfection of pranayama or Yogic breathing

Apana: a) One of the five pancha vayu (the five directions energy flows in the body), which together constitute the Pranic body or energy body (see figure _____pp.____); b) Pranic air current, descending from the navel pit, and governing elimination through excretory and reproductive organs

Apana vayu: see *Apana*

Aparigraha: a) One of the Yama (the first of Patanjali's eight limbs of Yoga); b) Translates as non-grasping and constitutes a decree not to take more than one needs

Aranyaka(s): text on rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices, and symbolic-sacrifices

Artha: a) One of the purushartha (the four motivations of human life); b) The pursuit of wealth; c) Literally means object of value or significance

Asamprajnata: Undistinguished samadhi (a stage in awakening where the ahamkara is still present)

Asamprajnata samadhi: see *Asamprajnata*

Asana(s): The physical postures of Yoga, designed to purify the bodymind and prepare it for seated meditation

Asteya: a) One of the Yama (the first of Patanjali's eight limbs of Yoga); b) Translates to honesty and constitutes a decree to tell the truth in all circumstances

Atma: a) Individual soul; b) Part of universal consciousness that animates the individual bodymind

Atman: Supreme Consciousness

Avatar: a) One who is born awake; b) A descendent or incarnation of supreme consciousness

Ayurveda: A system of wholistic medicine indigenous to India

Bahir trataka: External gazing, such as at a candle flame.

Bahiranga kumbhaka: External breath retention, or holding the breath after all the air in the lungs has been exhaled

Bahiskrita dhauti: see *Dhauti*

Bandhas: Literally means to bind or bond, refers to a posture in which organs and muscles are contracted and controlled, creating a psychomuscular energetic lock that redirects the flow of energy and locks it into place

Basti: a) Third shatkarma; b) Yogic enema

Bhadrasana: a) Literally means ‘Gracious pose’; b) A seated asana, or posture

Bhakti: a) Divine love; b) Pure devotion

Bhastrika pranayama: a) Type of pranayama, or breath practice; b) Literally means ‘bellows breath’ in which the breath is forcibly drawn in and out through the nose using an abdominal pumping action, like that of a bellows

Bhava(s): a) Intense inner attitude; b) State of mind and body; c) Divine mood(s)

Bhoga: Sensual gratification or enjoyment of experience

Bhramari pranayama: a) Type of pranayama, or breath practice; b) Literally means ‘black bee’ in which a soft humming sound is produced upon exhalation, vibrating the upper palate in the mouth

Bija: Seed

Bija mantra: Sacred seed syllable, such as Om, Ma, So, or Ham

Bindu: a) Point of potential energy and consciousness; b) Nucleus of psychic energy located in the brain; c) a drop of semen (in Tantric Yoga)

Brahmachari: The celibate student

Brahmacharya: a) One of the Niyama (second of Yoga’s eight limbs); b) Celibacy; c) Self-restraint; d) State of living in constant awareness of Brahman

Brahmanas: commentaries on rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices

Buddhi: a) Intellect; b) Discriminative faculty of mind; c) Aspect of mind closest to pure consciousness

Chakra(s): a) Literally means ‘wheel’ and refers to a subtle nerve or energetic center along the spine; b) Pranic/Psychic center(s) in the subtle body, responsible for specific physiological and psychic functions; c) Sites meditated upon in the Hatha Yoga tradition for the purpose of purification and transformation

Chitta: a) Individual mind or consciousness, including subconscious and unconscious layers of mind; b) Its functions are memory, thinking, concentration, attention, and inquiry; c) One of 24 elements constituting mind and part of the antah karana

Chitta shakti: a) Kinetic power akin to pure consciousness; b) The force that turns thought into action

Chittam: see *Chitta*

Dakshina nauli: See *Nauli*

Darsanas: see *Darshan*

Darshan: a) To be seen or beheld by the divine, or the guru (teacher) as the embodiment of the divine; b) Having a vision or experience of a divine being

Devi: a) Devine Cosmic Feminine; Shakti 2; b) A term used to describe a specific female avatar or teacher as the embodiment of Shakti

Dhanurasana: Literally means ‘bow pose,’ and refers to one of the major backbending asanas, or postures of Yoga

Dharana: a) The sixth of Patanjali’s eight limbs of Yoga; b) The practice of concentration

Dharma: a) Quality, duty, the path most righteous and unique to each person; b) That which is established and firm; c) One of the purushartha

Dhatu(s): a) Elements of the physical body; b) Also referred to as the seven tissues

Dhauti: a) Second of the shatkarma; b) Cleansing technique of the eyes, ears, tongue, forehead, esophagus, stomach, rectum, and anus

Dosha(s): a) The three humors or constitutional archetypes of the human body; b) See *Kapha*, *Pitta*, and *Vata*

Drishhti: A focal point of concentration used in the practice of *Dharana*

Dugdha neti: a) Neti performed with milk; b) see *Neti*

Dvapara yuga: see *Yuga*

Dyana: a) The seventh of Patanjali’s eight limbs of Yoga; b) The complete absence of thought; c) Spontaneous meditative state

Dvesha: a) One of the kleshas or five-fold afflictions; b) Aversion or dislike

Garima: a) A Siddhi or spiritual achievement; b) Power to become as heavy as desired

Ghariya: A period of 90 minutes

Ghr̥ita neti: a) Neti performed with Ghee; b) see *Neti*

Gomukhasana: Literally means ‘cows face pose’ and refers to a major and very early asana or posture in Yoga

Granthi: Literally means ‘knot’ and refers to one of three psychic knots in the subtle body

Grihastha: a) Householder; b) One who has chosen to live a spiritual life via worldly life; c) Opposite of a brahmachari, who makes vows and renounces worldly life

Guna(s): a) Quality of nature; b) Threefold capacity of manifest Shakti (see. *Tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattwa*); c) A negative state or disposition

Guru: Enlightened spiritual teacher or guide, who with the light of her illumined mind can awaken the minds of her devotees

Guru-sishya parampara: lineage passed down from teachers to students

Hatha: a) Comprised of two bija mantras, ha (vital force) and tha (mental energy), so hatha is the union of pranic and mental forces; b) see Hatha yoga

Hatha yoga: The science of Yoga that purifies the physical, subtle, and etheric bodymind, preparing it for transformation, awakening, or realization

Ida: see *Ida nadi*

Ida nadi: a) Major nadi, or energetic channel, running down the left side of the spine from mooladhara (root) to ajna (3rd eye) chakras (see chakras); b) Governs mental internal processes

Ishatva: a) A siddhi or spiritual accomplishment; b) The power to create and destroy at will

Isvara panidhanani: a) Offering up the fruits of one’s actions; b) The practice of selfless devotion

Iyengar yoga: A style of Yoga developed by B.K.S. Iyengar heavily focused on alignment and recovery from injury

Jainism: A spiritual tradition that focused on individual liberation

Jala basti: a) One of the shatkarma; b) Yogic enema using water

Jalandhara bandha: Literally means ‘throat lock,’ and refers to the practice where the chin lays on the upper sternum, arresting the flow of blood through the throat

Jala neti: a) One of the shatkarma; b) Nasal cleansing using saline water

Japa: Continuous repetition of a mantra

Jiva: Individual life

Jivanmukta: a) One who has transcended Individual life; b) One who is liberated

Jnana: Knowledge, cognition, or wisdom.

Jnanendriya: a) Organs of sense perception and knowledge; b) Comprised of ears, eyes, nose, tongue, and skin

Jyotisha: a) Illumination, effulgence, light; b) One who is versed in Vedic astrology

Kaama: a) First of the purushartha (the four motivations of human life); b) Refers to sensual gratification, passion, desire, and lust

Kaivalya: a) Liberation, experience of absoluteness; b) Non-qualified experience

Kali yuga: see *Yuga*

Kapalabhati: a) Literally means ‘skull shining breath’; b) Type of pranayama or breath practice

Kapha: a) One of the three doshas (constitutions); b) Phlegm or mucous; c) Water and earth

Karana sharira: Causal or etheric body

Karma: a) Action and reaction; b) Law of cause and effect; c) School of Yoga, where selfless service is the path to enlightenment

Karmendriya: organs of action

Kashmir Shaivism: Tradition of Tantra indigenous to Kashmir

Kevala: Without qualities or conditions

Kevala Kumbhaka: Spontaneous breath retention, where breath is held out without effort

Khechari mudra: a) A combination of posture, pranayama, and bandhas to direct the flow of energy within the bodymind; b) Cutting beneath the tongue over time, massaging it with medicated oils and lengthening it out until it can reach back and up to rest in the nasal cavity against the midbrain

Koormasana: Literally means ‘Tortoise pose’, and refers to an advanced asana or posture within Hatha Yoga

Kosha(s): a) Sheath or body; b) Realm of experience or existence

Kriya shakti: The vital energy that enlivens yogic practice

Kriya yogi: A Yogi or practitioner of Raja Yoga, or the school of Yoga where disciplined practice of Hatha Yoga is the path enlightenment

Kriyas: Dynamic Yogic practices

Kukktasana: Literally means ‘cockerel pose,’ and refers to an advanced asana or posture within Hatha Yoga

Kumbhaka: Breath retention

Kundalini: Each person’s spiritual energy, capacity, and consciousness

Kundalini shakti: a) Also known as ‘serpent power’; human potential energy lying dormant in mooladhara chakra; b) That which passes through sushumna nadi to sahasrara chakra when awakened

Laghima: a) Siddhi or spiritual accomplishment; b) Power to become as light and weightless as desired

Laya: Dissolution or absorption of mind

Madhyama nauli: a) One of the shatkarma; b) Isolation and contraction of rectus abdomini muscles

Maha bandha: Literally means ‘great lock,’ and refers to the combination of all three bandha with kumbhaka simultaneously

Maha mudra: a) Literally means ‘great attitude’ and refers to a major practice in Hatha Yoga; b) Includes Moola, shambhavi and khichari mudra simultaneously

Maha vedha mudra: a) Literally means ‘great piercing attitude’ and refers to a major practice of Hatha Yoga; b) Practice takes place in sidhasana with shambhavi mudra and putting pressure on the buttocks

Mahasiddhas: a) Highest spiritual accomplishments possible; b) Enlightened masters who have achieved all these accomplishments

Mahima: a) Siddhi or spiritual accomplishment; b) The power to become as large as desired

Maithuna: Sacred sex

Manas: a) Finite mind; b) The desiring faculty of mind

Manipura: Literally means ‘city of jewels’ and refers to the 3rd chakra, situated between the navel and the spine

Manomaya kosha: The mental sheath or body

Manonmani: a) Literally means ‘mind without mind’; b) State of samadhi; c) Consciousness devoid of the functions of the antah karana

Mantra(s): Sacred syllable, word, or phrase that is chanted internally or externally

Mantra japa: a) The repetition of a mantra; b) The use of sound vibration to practice Dharana (concentration), achieve Dyana (meditation), and realize Samadhi (union, bliss)

Math/Matha(s): Religious organization or a purposeful collective of people with a shared interest, vision, and project, such as non-profit organizations

Matsyendrasana: Literally means ‘pose of matsyendranath,’ referring to the first guru of the Hatha Yoga tradition and a significant asana or posture within Hatha Yoga

Maya: a) Literally means ‘illusion’; b) Veiling power of manifest shakti; c) Illusory nature of the phenomenal world

Mayurasana: Literally means ‘peacock pose’; and refers to an advanced asana or posture within Hatha Yoga

Mitahara: a) the ideal diet prescribed in Hatha Yoga; b) Sweet, agreeable food that leaves one-fourth of the stomach empty, and is eaten as an offering rather than to please the senses

Moksa (Moksha): a) Liberation from the cycles of birth and death; b) Unbound by the illusions of maya

Moola bandha: Contraction of the urogenital muscles, perineum, and anus for the purposes of directing prana

Mooladhara: Root chakra situated at the base of the coccyx

Moorcha pranayama: Literally means ‘fainting or swooning breath’ and refers to a breath practice whereby air is inhaled slowly and retained for an extended period of time

Mudra(s): a) Literally means ‘gesture’ and refers to a combination of asana, pranayama, and bandha; b) A physical, mental, and psychic attitude which draws in, channels, and expresses cosmic energy via the bodymind

Nadi(s): a) Flow; b) Subtle channel in the pranic body that conducts the flow of shakti; c) Comparable to the meridians of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

Nadi shodana pranayama: Translates as ‘purifying breath’ due to the cleansing impact it has on the two channels (ida and pingala) that wrap around susumna nadi (the central channel through which kundalini shakti rises as we awaken)

Nauli: a) Literally means ‘abdominal massage’ and refers to the fifth shatkarma (intense purifying practices unique to Hatha Yoga); b) A Hatha Yoga practice whereby the rectus abdomini muscles are isolated and contracted vertically, creating a churning or pumping action in the gut

Neti: a) Third of the shatkarma (intense purifying practices unique to Hatha Yoga); b) Nasal cleansing using saline water or a waxed string

Niyama: a) Second of Patanjali’s eight limbs of Yoga; b) A set of five recommended observances or a suggested code of conduct to support the practice of Yoga and minimize distractions

Ojas: a) Vitality; b) Sublimated sexual energy; c) Kundalini shakti

Padartha: Both the substance of a thing and its meaning

Padmasana: Literally means ‘lotus pose’ and refers to an advanced seated posture in Hatha Yoga

Parama-atman: a) The supreme atma or highest consciousness; b) Universal or cosmic self

Paramahansa sannyasin: A monk who lives in poverty and spends his waking life performing austerities

Paschimottanasana: Literally ‘back stretching pose’ refers to one of the major asanas or postures of Hatha Yoga

Pingala: See *Pingala nadi*

Pingala nadi: a) One of the three primary nadi that conducts prana shakti; b) Emerges from the right side of mooladhara opposite ida and intersects each of the chakras before reaching the right side of ajna chakra; c) Also associated with the mundane realm of experience and externalized awareness

Pitta: a) One of the three doshas or humors; b) Bile; c) Water and fire

Plavini pranayama: Literally ‘gulping breath’ refers to a breath practice in which air is swallowed into the stomach and retained

Pooraka: Inhalation

Prakamya: Certain fulfillment of desire

Prakriti: a) Nature; b) Manifested shakti; c) Vehicle of Purusha (consciousness)

Prana: Vital energy force sustaining life, permeating all of creation, and existing in all dimensions

Prana shakti: The force or power of Prana

Prana vayu: a) Pranic air current; b) Also refers to specific current centralized in the thoracic region from the throat to the diaphragm and responsible for processes of inspiration and absorption

Pranamaya kosha: The pranic body or sheath

Pranayama: a) The fourth of Patanjali’s eight limbs of Yoga; b) A Breathing technique that increases the pranic capacity of the bodymind

Pranic: Prana as the source, cause, or root cause, indicates etiology

Prapti: a) A siddhi or spiritual accomplishment; b) The power to travel anywhere and everywhere as desired

Pratipaksha bhavanam: Practice of substituting opposite thought forms in the mind

Pratyahara: a) The fifth of Patanjali’s eight limbs of Yoga; b) Sense withdrawal, or the re-direction of the senses inward to sense the Self

Puranas: A trove of 18 texts consisting of legends and mythological narrations dealing with creation, recreation and the genealogies of sages and rulers

Puruṣārthas: a) Purpose of individual consciousness; b) The four basic needs or desires; c) Consists of Artha (wealth), Kaama (love/desire), dharma (duty), and moksa (liberation)

Purusha: a) Pure undifferentiated consciousness; b) What enlivens prakriti (bodymind and all of nature)

Raga: a) According to Patanjali, one of the kleshas (obstacles to practice); b) Liking, attraction, and attachment; c) In Tantra it is the force which restricts an individual’s capacity to exert willpower and desire

Raja Yoga: a) The school of Yoga where Hatha Yoga is believed to be the most ideal path towards enlightenment; b) The eightfold path as formulated by Patanjali

Rajas: a) The second quality of nature and mind; b) Dynamicism, movement, restlessness and heat; c) Also refers to a woman's menstrual and reproductive secretions

Rajasic: When the nature of a person or thing has been influenced by or expresses rajas

Rasas: a) The six flavors in Ayurveda; b) Sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, astringent

Rechaka: Exhalation or emptying of the lungs

Rishis: Ancient 'seers' or awakened teachers

Sa-ananada samadhi: Level of samadhi that is euphoric, a state where no reasoning or reflection is present, only bliss is present

Sa-asmita samadhi: A state of pure 'I', where you are just there and aware of nothing else aside from existing

Sadhaka: a) Spiritual practitioner; b) A person striving for self-realization or an understanding of cosmic reality and consciousness

Sadhaka's dosha: A practitioner's constitution

Sadhanas: A set of spiritual practices

Sadhya: The object of practice

Sahajoli: See *Sahajoli mudra*

Sahajoli mudra: A mudra practice, essentially vajroli for a woman, involving the contraction of urogenital muscles

Sahasrara: See Sahasrara chakra

Sahasrara chakra: a) Energy center known as the 'thousand petaled lotus' at the crown of the head; b) Associated with the pituitary gland

Sahita: See *Sahita kumbhaka*

Sahita kumbhaka: Referred to as 'connected pranayama' in which there is a flow between inhalation, exhalation and retention

Samadhi: a) The eighth of Patanjali's eight limbs of Yoga; b) The culmination of meditation; c) A state of oneness of mind with the object of concentration

Samana vayu: a) Pranic air current in the middle region of the body; b) Facilitates assimilation (of both prana and food)

Samhitas: Mantras and benedictions

Samprajnata: See *samprajnata samadhi*

Samprajnata samadhi: Positive phase of samadhi where there is illumination and awareness

Samskara(s): Mental impression stored in the subtle body and existing as an archetype in the brain

Samyama: The threefold process of Dharana, Dhyana, and samadhi occurring respectively

Sanatana dharma: Righteousness

Sannyasa: See *Sannyasi*

Sannyasi: Renunciate, or one who has sacrificed worldly affairs for the experience of self-realization

Santosh: a) One of the Yama (observances); b) Contentment; c) A decree to practice contentment

Sati: The ancient practice where widows were expected to sacrifice themselves atop their husband's funeral pyres

Sattwa: a) Third quality of nature and mind; b) Steady, pure, harmonious

Sattwic: That which has been influenced by or expresses sattwa

Satya: a) One of the Yamas (observances); b) Truthful, authentic, genuine; c) A decree to tell the truth

Savichara samadhi: The practice of samadhi on subtle elements

Savitarka samadhi: The practice of samadhi on gross objects

Satya yuga: See *Yuga*

Saucha: a) One of the Niyama (observances), the second of Patanjali's eight limbs of Yoga; b) Purity

Seetkari pranayama: a) 'Hissing breath' refers to a breathing practice within Hatha Yoga; b) A practice that cools the entire body

Shakti: a) Vital energy force; b) Expression of or vehicle for pure consciousness

Shakti chalana mudra: Significant mudra within Hatha Yoga that churns or massages the abdomen by contracting isolated abdominal muscles sequentially

Shambhavi: a) Feminine counterpart to Shambhu (Shiva); b) Shakti

Shastra(s): An authoritative treatise on any subject

Shatkarma: a) The six Yogic techniques of purification; b) Comprised of neti, dhauti, nauli, basti, trataka, and kapalabhati

Shavasana: 'Corpse pose' refers to an essential asana or posture in Hatha Yoga

Sheetali pranayama: a) 'Cooling breath' refers to a breathing practice within Hatha Yoga; b) Lowers body temperature and diminishes thirst

Sheetkrama kapalabhati: a) Passing of water from the mouth out through the nose

Shiva: a) State of pure consciousness; b) Original source of Yoga; c) Lord of Yogis

Shraddha: Faith

Siddhasana: 'Accomplished pose' is an advanced seated asana or posture in Hatha Yoga

Siddhis: a) 'Perfection' or spiritual accomplishments that generally bestow enhanced pranic and psychic capacity; b) Paranormal or superhuman feats achieved via control of chitta (mind) and prana (vital energy)

Simhasana: 'Lion pose' refers to a significant seated asana or posture in Hatha Yoga

Sloka(s): Verse/s

Sthala basti: See *Basti*

Sthula sharira: Gross or physical body

Sukshma sharira: Subtle or astral body

Suryabedha pranayama: 'Vitality stimulating breath' refers to a type of breath practice within Hatha Yoga

Sushumna: See *Sushumna nadi*

Sushumna nadi: The central channel and conduit for Kundalini shakti

Sutra: Aphorism

Sutra neti: a) Nasal cleansing with thread; b) One of the shatkarma

Svadyaya: a) Study of scripture; b) Study of anything that elevates consciousness or self-awareness

Swami(s): A male monk

Swastikasana: ‘Auspicious pose’ refers to a central asana or posture in Hatha Yoga

Tamas: a) The first quality of nature; b) Procrastination, stagnation, and inertia

Tamasic: That which has been influenced by or expresses/embodyes tamas

Tanmatra(s): a) Subtle or primary principle of mind; b) Comprised of gandha (smell), rasa (taste), roopa (form), sparsha (touch/feel), and shabda (sound)

Tantra: a) A primary branch of Yoga distinguished by the belief that bodily purification prevents psychic splitting and makes the Yama and Niyama spontaneous and effortless; b) Sixty four texts expounding upon the philosophy and techniques of Tantra

Tantra yoga: a) A primary branch of Yoga distinguished by the belief that bodily purification prevents psychic splitting and makes the Yama and Niyama spontaneous and effortless

Tantric: Something that or someone who embodies the philosophy and practices of Tantra

Tapas: a) Fire of will; b) Fire of purification; c) Welcoming pain and suffering in the process of purification

Tattwas: a) Elements; b) True or real states

Tejas: Fire or lustre, brilliance

Trataka: a) One of the shatkarma (purification practices of Hatha Yoga); b) Technique of gazing steadfastly on an object of concentration

Treta yuga: See *Yuga*

Uddiyana bandha: ‘Abdominal retraction lock’ refers to a practice in Hatha Yoga where the abdomen is drawn in and up after all air has been expelled from the lungs

Ujjayi pranayama: ‘Victorious’ or ‘Psychic breath’ refers to a breath practice in Hatha Yoga where the epiglottis is contracted, producing a sound similar to that of an ocean wave

Upadesa: Spiritual instruction

Upanishads: a) Books of the vedas, traditionally 108 in number; b) Containing the realizations of the rishis concerning reality, identity, nature, and consciousness.

Uttankoormasana: ‘Stretching tortoise pose’ refers to one of the more advanced asanas or postures in Hatha Yoga

Vahnisara dhauti: See *Dhauti*

Vairagya: a) Non-attachment or the absence of sensual cravings or desires; b) Supreme dispassion

Vaishnavism: a form of religion that competes with the asceticism of Vedanta, wherein *bhakti* (devotion to your beloved deity via practices that result in mental absorption) ultimately leads to self-knowledge, liberation, and bliss

Vajroli: See *Vajroli mudra*

Vajroli mudra: ‘Thunderbolt attitude’ refers to a male Hatha Yoga practice of contracting the urogenital muscles and redirecting sexual energy up the sushumna

Vama nauli: See *Nauli*

Vanaprastha: a) Recluse or pilgrim who has finished his family responsibilities and taken to the spiritual life; b) The stage of life prior to sanyasa or formal renunciation

Varisara dhauti: See *Dhauti*

Vasana(s): Literally translates to ‘smell’ and refers to the impression left from past actions that remains unconsciously in the mind and induces a person to repeat the action

Vashitva: a) A siddhi, or spiritual accomplishment; b) The power to control all objects, living and non-living

Vata: One of the three doshas or humors; b) Wind and gas; c) Air and ether

Vatakrama kapalabhati: See *Kapalabhati*

Vayu: a) Wind; b) Pranic air current in the bodymind

Vedanta: a) Culmination of the essential knowledge of the vedas; b) A monistic philosophy concerning the truth of existence, creation, and the illusion of duality

Vedas: a) Most ancient texts revealed to the sages and saints of India; b) Four treatises comprised of explanations and regulations for every aspect of human life from the supreme reality to worldly affairs; c) Includes the Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharava Vedas

Vedic: Something that or someone who embodies the philosophy of the Vedas

Veerasana: ‘Hero’s pose’ refers to an asana or posture in Hatha Yoga specifically designed for concentration and discriminative thinking

Vijnanamaya kosha: The cognitive body or sheath.

Vinyasa: Flow or sequence of postures

Vipareeta karani: An asana or posture within Hatha Yoga

Vipassana: A meditation practice that has its roots in Buddhism

Visnu: a) One of the holy trinity (Shiva, Vishnu, Brahman); b) The cosmic preserver or sustainer; c) Also refers to the vital capacity of the manipura chakra, which stores and distributes prana so that health and stamina are maintained in the body

Vritti: Thought forms or ‘mental modifications’

Vyana vayu: Pranic air current pervading the whole body

Vyasa: Literally “the compiler” is a vague figure credited with arranging The Vedas into four major categories; the *Samhitas* (mantras and benedictions), the *Aranyakas* (text on rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices, and symbolic-sacrifices), the *Brahmanas* (commentaries on rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices), and The *Upanishads* (texts discussing meditation, philosophy, and spiritual knowledge)

Vyutkrama kapalabhati: Hatha Yoga technique where water is passed through the nose and out the mouth

Yama: a) The first of Patanjali’s eight limbs of yoga; b) Self-restraints or guidelines; c) A period of three hours

Yoga: A state of union between mind and body, chitta and prana, Shiva and shakti; Both a tradition and a phenomena.

Yogacharya: Yogic authority

Yogi(s): An accomplished practitioner of Yoga

Yuga(s): a) An age or cycle of earth and mankind; b) Four sequential yugas repeat infinitely throughout time: satya, treta, dwapara, and kali

Appendix B: Supplemental Materials

Table 1

Citations for exemplar articles

1. Quach, D., Gibler, R. C., & Jatrowski-Mano, K. (2016). Does home practice compliance make a difference in the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions for adolescents? *Mindfulness*, 8(2), 495-504.
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3. Genovese, J. E.C., & Fondran, K. M. (2016). Depression and anxiety decline after participation in a semester long Yoga class. *Psychology and Education, An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 53(3-4), 52-54.
4. Medina, J., Hopkins, L., Powers, M., Baird, S. O., & Smits, J. (2015). The effects of hatha Yoga on facets of distress tolerance. *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*. 44(4), 288-300.
5. Riley, K. E., & Park, C. L. (2015). How does Yoga reduce stress? A systemic review of mechanisms of change and guide for future inquiry. *Health Psychology Review*, 9(3), 379-396.
6. Shapiro, S. L., Lyons, K. E., Miller, R. C., Butler, B., Vieten, C., & Zelazo, P. D. (2015). Contemplation in the classroom: A new direction for improving childhood education. *Educational Psychology Review*, 27(1), 1-30.
7. Frank, J. L., Kohler, K., Peal, A., & Bose, B. (2016). Effectiveness of a school-based Yoga program on adolescent mental health and school performance: Findings from a randomized controlled trial. *Mindfulness*, 8(3), 544-553.
8. Pradhan, B., Gray, R., Parikh, T., Akkireddi, P., & Pumariega, A. (2015). Trauma interventions using mindfulness based extinction and reconsolidation (TIMBER) as monotherapy for chronic PTSD: A pilot study. *Adolescent Psychiatry*, 5(2), 125-131.
9. Quach, D., Mano, K. E. J., & Alexander, K. (2016). A randomized controlled trial examining the effect of mindfulness meditation on working memory capacity in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 58(5), 489-496.
10. Hopkins, L. B., Medina, J. L., Baird, S. O., Rosenfeild, D., Powers, M. B., & Smits, J. A. J. (2016). Heated hatha yoga to target cortisol reactivity to stress and affective eating in women at risk for obesity-related illnesses: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology*, 84(6), 558-564.

Appendix C: Copyright Permissions and Associated Communications

Figure 1

Copyright permissions from Integral Yoga Publications



3 February 2020

Re: Genelle Benker, Psy.D Candidate, LMHCA, RYT

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Beyond Dissociation and Appropriation: Evaluating the Politics of U.S. Psychology Via Hermeneutic Interpretation of Culturally Embedded Presentations of Yoga

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Prem Anjali

Rev. Prem Anjali, Ph.D.
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 108 Yogaville Way
 Buckingham, VA 23921
 media@integralyoga.org

Figure 2

Record of attempted communications for permissions for use of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **SRFax Delivery Notification** <fax@srfax.com>

Date: Thu, Feb 6, 2020 at 4:49 PM

Subject: SRFax Transmission FAILED to 01191 634-422-0169

To: <drgenellebenker@gmail.com>



Transmission Status:	Failed
Subject:	Permission to Publish
Ref. Code:	
Sender:	833-479-0226 (drgenellebenker@gmail.com)
Fax Sent:	Feb 06/20 04:49 PM
Recipient Fax:	01191 634-422-0169
Remote Fax ID:	
# of Pages Sent:	0 of 2 (Call Length: 0:00)
Reason for Failure:	No Answer
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Figure 3

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From: **SRFax Delivery Notification** <fax@srfax.com>
Date: Fri, Feb 7, 2020 at 9:36 AM
Subject: SRFax Transmission FAILED to 01191 634-422-0169
To: <drgenellebenker@gmail.com>



Transmission Status:	Failed
Subject:	Permission to Publish
Ref. Code:	
Sender:	833-479-0226 (drgenellebenker@gmail.com)
Fax Sent:	Feb 07/20 09:36 AM
Recipient Fax:	01191 634-422-0169
Remote Fax ID:	
# of Pages Sent:	0 of 2 (Call Length: 0:00)
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Figure 4

Record of attempted communications for permissions for use of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika

On Mon, Feb 10, 2020 at 10:55 AM SRFax Delivery Notification <fax@srfax.com> wrote:



Transmission Status:	Failed
Subject:	Permission to Publish
Ref. Code:	
Sender:	833-479-0226 (drgenellebenker@gmail.com)
Fax Sent:	Feb 10/20 10:55 AM
Recipient Fax:	01191 634-422-0169
Remote Fax ID:	
# of Pages Sent:	0 of 2 (Call Length: 0:00)
Reason for Failure:	No Answer
Retries:	0

Faxed document is available for viewing on-line.

Figure 5

Record of attempted communications for permissions for use of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Genelle Benker** <drgenellebenker@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Feb 4, 2020 at 10:55 AM

Subject: permissions for use of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika for a doctoral dissertation

To: <durgesh.sssociety@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern,

I am a graduate student that extensively employed the text *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* for my doctoral dissertation. My methodology required I cite/quote heavily, thus I am seeking permission to do so from the Yoga Publications Trust. This is the final requirement needed to publish this work, which is being used solely for educational purposes.

Unfortunately my extensive attempts to reach someone at the Yoga Publications Trust has not been fruitful. It is my hope that in reaching out the the Seva Society I can obtain up to date contact information to reach someone at the Trust.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Genelle Benker, Psy.D Candidate, LMHCA, RYT
drgenellebenker@gmail.com
2211 Elliott Ave, Suite 200
206.618.1108

Figure 6

Timeline of attempted communications for obtaining permissions for Hatha Yoga Pradipika

The following documents the attempts Genelle Benker has made to reach the Yoga Publications Trust. These attempts were made with the aim of obtaining permission to cite/quote extensively from the text, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* in her dissertation titled, *Beyond Dissociation and Appropriation: Evaluating the Politics of U.S. Psychology Via Hermeneutic Interpretation of Culturally Embedded Presentations of Yoga*.

- August 5th, 2019: The following numbers were identified from the website: <https://www.biharyoga.net/contact-us.php> as being the contact phone numbers for the Yoga Publications Trust:
 - **(011)91 634-422-2430**
 - **(011)91 634-422-8603**
- August 6th, 2019: The above numbers were called. The phone rang with no answer and the call was disconnected without reaching an answering machine.
- August 14th, 2019: The above numbers were called with the same result.
- August 29th, 2019: These numbers were again called with the same result.
- October 1st, 2019: A physical letter was sent to the following address via Fed-Ex. This letter was an explicit request for permission to cite/quote extensively from the text, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* for educational purposes only:
 - **Bihar School of Yoga**
Ganga Darshan, Fort
Munger, Bihar 811201, India
 - No response to this letter was ever received
- November 4th, 2019: After waiting a month for a response, the above numbers were again called with the same result as experienced previously.
- Attempts to make contact were temporarily put on hold while permissions were being obtained from Integral Yoga Publications and Media (a separate publications organization responsible for the other source text used in the above mentioned dissertation).
- January 28th, 2020: An email address (durgesh.sssociety@gmail.com) was located on the same website mentioned above. This email address was for a sister organization under the Bihar School of Yoga called the Seva Society.
- On Feb 4, 2020, at 10:55 AM, the attached email was sent to this contact with the hope of reaching someone who could provide up-to-date contact information for the Yoga Publications Trust.
- On Feb 7th, 8th, and 10th, 2020: Attempts were made to fax the number listed ((011)91 634-422-0169) on the above mentioned website for the Yoga Publications trust. These attempts failed, and confirmation of these failed attempts are also attached below.

After numerous attempts using a wide variety of means and over the course of many months, attempts to contact were ceased. Given the dissertation was to be used for educational purposes only (and not for profit), permission to publish w/out permission from the Yoga Publications Trust was granted by Antioch University Seattle.